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The Nature and Guilt of Schism considered, with a particular Reference to the Principles of the Reformation,

IN

EIGHT SERMONS,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR 1807,

AT

THE LECTURE

FOUNDED BY

THE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, M. A.

CANON OF SALISBURY.

BY THOMAS LE MESURIER, M. A.

RECTOR OF NEWNTON LONGVILLE, BUCKS, AND LATE FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Ου καπηλευομεν τον λογον του θεου.

2 COR. ii. 17.

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TO

LORD VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH.

MY DEAR LORD,

Next to His Majesty, whom I would not venture, without his express permission, to approach, you are, as it seems to me, most incontestibly the person to whom discourses like the following may, with the greatest propriety, be addressed.

It has happened to you, what I believe never happened to any other minister, that as well your first entering into office, as latterly your retiring from it, have been marked by the most disinterested attachment to the religion of your country as well as to the interests of your sovereign, to the church as well as to the state.

Of the many benefits which resulted to the nation at large from your administration

while it lasted, and which continue to be felt even now through every member of the government, in the finances as well as in the army and the navy, this is not the place to speak. Happily they now begin to be on all sides acknowledged; and if I am anxious that more complete justice should be done to you in this as in other respects, it is owing not so much to the interest which I take in all that concerns your welfare, as to the firm belief which I entertain that such a sense of your merits, if more universally prevalent, would materially tend in its consequences to improve our public situation, and to make us respectable both at home and abroad.

But I also know, that among the measures which were in your contemplation, and which you had particularly at heart, there were some which had for their immediate object the providing for the advancement and security of our ecclesiastical establishment, and the counteracting, if not preventing of those disorders, which I have laboured, in the language, and, I trust, in the spirit of Scripture, to mark and to reprove.

To these and many other reasons which might be alleged for prefixing your name to this work, I have to add the personal, and to me most gratifying consideration of that intimacy which has subsisted between us from our early youth, and which your advancement to some of the highest offices in the kingdom, has only contributed to cement and to increase.

That it may please the Almighty to crown you with every blessing, more especially by making you his instrument of good both to the king and the people, and that you may daily more and more cherish and maintain that true faith in Christ, and that entire dependence on the Divine Providence, without which there is and can be no solid peace or happiness, is the sincere wish and prayer of him who is ever,

MY DEAR LORD,

MOST FAITHFULLY, AND

AFFECTIONATELY YOURS,

THO. LE MESURIER.

EXTRACT

From the last Will and Testament of the late Rev. John Bampton, Canon of Salisbury.

I give and bequeath my lands and estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars, of the University of Oxford, for ever, to have and to hold all and singular the said lands or estates upon trust, and to the intents and purposes hereinafter mentioned; that is to say, I will and appoint that the Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford, for the time being, shall take and receive all the rents, issues, and profits thereof; and (after all taxes, reparations, and necessary deductions made) that he pay all the remainder to the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be established, for ever, in the said University, and to be performed in the manner following:

I direct and appoint that, upon the first Tuesday in Easter term, a Lecturer be yearly chosen by the Heads of Colleges only, and

by no others, in the room adjoining the Printing house, between the hours of ten in the morning and two in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St. Mary's in Oxford, between the commencement of the last month in Lent term, and the end of the third week in Act term.

Also, I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following subjects: to confirm and establish the Christian faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics; upon the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures; upon the authority of the writings of the primitive fathers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive church; upon the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; upon the divinity of the Holy Ghost; upon the articles of the Christian faith, as comprehended in the apostles' and Nicene creeds.

Also, I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always printed within two months after they are preached, and one copy shall be given to the Chancellor of the University, and one

copy to the Head of every College, and one copy to the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one copy to be put into the Bodleian library, and the expense of printing them shall be paid out of the revenue of the land or estates given for establishing the Divinity Lecture Sermons; and the preacher shall not be paid, nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

Also, I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, unless he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, and that the same person shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.

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SERMON I.

LUKE xii. 51.

Suppose ye, that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division.

OF all the calamities under which the church of Christ has suffered, there is none which has produced such pernicious and lasting effects, as the dissentions by which in all ages it has been torn. Even the cruelties and oppressions, to which it was exposed at the beginning from the fury of its persecutors, may be said to have been harmless in comparison of these. Indeed, in many respects, it was found, that persecution rather increased than repressed the zeal of the first disciples. It seems to have operated like that temporary pressure upon certain well-compacted bodies, which always produces a powerful re-action. It was only when the principle of disorganization was at work on the

body itself, when the fire raged within, that apprehension might be reasonably entertained of serious and essential danger.

Nor was this calamity more severe or deplorable, than it was unnatural and strange. We may collect this from the very words of our Saviour in the text. "Suppose ye," said he, "that I came to give peace on earth?" This was indeed what might well have been supposed. It was what had been proclaimed at his birth; it was what had been promised by all the prophets, who had spoken of his kingdom. The angels' song was, "On earth peace; good will towards men *." The language of the holy men was still more strongly expressive of the strictest harmony, and the most abundant love. They declared that, in his day, "The "wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the "leopard should lie down with the kid, and "the calf, and the lion, and the young fatling together, and a little child should lead "them †." How could such representations be consistent with any degree of disunion or division?

In another point of view, also, this representation must have appeared quite inconsistent with the ideas, which the disciples had been justly led to entertain of their master's king-

* Luke ii. 14. † Isaiah xi. 6.

dom. It was to be eternal. "Of the increase "of his government," it had been said, "there "shall be no end*." And yet, how should it stand at all under such circumstances? They knew well, our blessed Lord himself had so argued, that, "A kingdom divided against it- "self is brought to desolation, and a house di- "vided against a house falleth." †

Strange, however, and difficult to be reconciled as all these circumstances might appear, when they were first unfolded to the world, every year, as it has rolled on in the lapse of ages, has only more fully ascertained the reality of them, and borne a more decided testimony to the truth, and the infallibility of that divine Being, by whose mouth they were first made known. We find, moreover, that the strife and the contention which he foretold, take their date almost from the very establishment of the gospel; and indeed, this also was not obscurely intimated by our Saviour at the same time, and almost in the same breath. "I am come," said he, "to send fire upon the earth; and what will "I if it be already kindled ‡?" Even while he was in the world, that spirit of ambition, and that love of distinction, which are the most fruitful causes of dissention, had manifested themselves among the disciples. Nay, it was

* Isaiah ix. 7. † Luke xi. 17. ‡ Luke xii. 49.

only after repeated lessons of humility, and "through much tribulation*," that the apostles were taught the genuine doctrines of meekness and of charity. Still more widely, and more fiercely did the evil spread itself, when he was withdrawn from the earth, and the preaching of the word had devolved upon those who, however entrusted with the most extraordinary powers, could not pretend to be more than fallible men, nor could assume to speak with the authority and weight, which must exclusively belong to the only son of God. In proportion too, as the kingdom of Christ became more extended, a wider field was opened for the adversary to carry his designs into execution, and to sow the tares among the wheat. So rapidly indeed, and so openly did the evil spread itself, that, far from having any difficulty in tracing its progress, we cannot but see that it forms a most prominent part of ecclesiastical history. It is indeed, to the existence of that ambitious and contentious spirit, that we owe the greater part of the apostolical writings; which, at the same time that they contain the most profitable instructions, and much of information upon great points of faith, which had not perhaps before been so clearly revealed, do also in the strongest manner attest the er-

* Acts xiv. 22.

rors and the divisions, which made it necessary that these strong protests, and pointed admonitions against evil doctrines and evil teachers should be both recorded and proclaimed.

That ever since that time, not only schisms, but heresies have abounded in the church, is so far from being matter of doubt or of question, that, on the contrary, their existence and number have been favourite topics of declamation with the most celebrated champions of infidelity. This has been considered as one of the weakest parts of our holy religion by all those who have laboured either openly or covertly to subvert its foundations. A comparison has even been instituted between Christianity and Paganism, for the purpose of ascribing to the latter a pre-eminence in point of humanity, and of liberality. We have been told of the indulgence which the different nations of the heathen always shewed to each other in this respect; that not only individuals, but bodies of men were allowed, without interruption, to worship such gods, and to use such ceremonies as they had chosen to adopt; while, on the other hand, the several descriptions of Christians, though professing to worship the same God, have persecuted each other, even to death, for differences the most trivial and insignificant; and we have been asked, if this was the

charity and the peace which we say that it was the end of our religion to establish?

To these, and the like cavils, very sufficient answers have at different times, and by various persons been returned [1]. My present business is only with the fact of the schisms' having existed; which however, to any sound reasoner, will never furnish the least inference at all prejudicial to the interest of Christianity. It must still be apparent that to those divisions, which have so sorely rent the church, the word of God has never, properly speaking, ministered an occasion. In the perverse inclinations of men, and in the violence of their passions, the true source of all these disorders must be sought. And having been, as they were foretold by our Saviour, they are in truth to be numbered, as I have before hinted, among the evidences of his divinity. It must also be considered as a further proof of the Almighty hand which hath wrought for us, that that disunion, which almost invariably operates to the

[1] See Dr. Maltby's Observations upon some of these later attacks. Illustrations of the Truth of the Christian Religion, chap. vii. I cannot help feeling some concern at seeing new, and apparently very large editions of Gibbon's History advertised. If Hume and he are still to continue our great masters in historical knowledge, surely it is desirable that the publication of them should be accompanied with such notes, as should detect and expose their attacks upon religion, and the unfairness of their narrative in all that relates to the welfare and advancement of the church of Christ.

dissolution of every community where it enters, has in this instance had no such effect; nay, that it has even produced consequences that were beneficial; not the least considerable of which has been the preservation of the holy Scriptures in their integrity; while the jealousy of the different sects, watching over each other, has made any material falsification or interpolation almost impossible.

Still, however greatly we may admire the wisdom and the power of God, which can thus bring good out of evil: however firmly we may be persuaded that the existence of schism, far from operating as an excuse for rejecting the gospel, does in reality furnish the strongest arguments against infidelity, we must not suffer ourselves to be deluded into an idea, that it is a matter indifferent in itself, or not an evil of the greatest magnitude. Still less must we imagine, that it is an act against the commission of which we have no need to be guarded; or which, when committed, requires not to be deplored and repented of. We must regard it as, what in truth it is, what it has always in the church, until very late years, been taken to be, a very grievous sin. It is one, of which every congregation, as well as every individual, looked upon themselves as particularly concerned to stand clear. Whenever, therefore, a separation took place in any church, or community of

Christians, great anxiety was shown by every one of the parties to account for their conduct; and to shew that the guilt, which was universally allowed to follow the act, did not belong to them and to their friends, but to those of the other side. It was wisely reasoned that, although our Saviour had foretold consequences which would follow from his doctrine, this did in no degree operate as a recommendation or approbation of them; that his having declared, that "he was not come to give peace upon "earth, but rather division," would no way excuse the individuals, by whose means peace should be driven away, and division brought in. It was remembered, that in the very same breath with which he had at another time declared that, "It must needs be that offences "should come *," he had added, "Woe to that "man by whom the offence cometh."

If we required any arguments to shew, what indeed our reason might of itself point out to us, the great utility, as well as loveliness of union, our blessed Lord has not left us to seek. The repeated and forcible exhortations tending to that effect, which he delivered in his several discourses to his disciples; and more especially in those which immediately preceded his crucifixion, speak but too evidently what was the

* Matthew xviii. 7.

end of his doctrine, and what were the means by which he intended that it should be advanced. He prayed to the Father, that the disciples "might be one, even as the Father and he "were one *;" than which it is impossible to devise any terms more expressive of the completest union in every respect, in thought and in word, as well as in deed. And that this unity of the church was intended to produce great and powerful effects even upon those that were without, we are not left merely to infer; for he goes on almost immediately after to repeat his prayer for the apostles, in order, as he says, addressing himself to the Father, "That "they all may be one, as thou Father art "in me, and I in thee; that they may also be "one with us, that the world may believe that "thou hast sent me†." The union of Christians with one another was, you see, to be an evidence of the divine mission of their great teacher and master. Again, he says, the more to enforce it, "I in them, and thou in me; "that they may be made perfect in one, and "that the world may know that thou hast sent "me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved "me‡" It is impossible to consider these, among other passages, without being satisfied that they relate, not merely to the preserva-

* John xvii. 11. † Ib. 21. ‡ Ib.

tion of charity in general, but to that particular conformity in religious sentiment, in points of faith and modes of worship, which must have subsisted between Christ and his disciples during his continuance upon earth. They were his flock, and he the one shepherd. There was no hint of their separating into different and independent companies; of any liberty to choose separate paths for themselves. All our Lord's words pointed to the strictest obedience, to the closest adherence to one uniform rule. "Ye are "my friends, if ye keep whatsoever I have com-"manded you." "If ye keep my commandments, "ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept "my father's commandments, and abide in his "love*." Will it now be said, that the man who first separated himself from the church, who, upon pretences more or less frivolous, declared himself independent of his brethren, did "abide" in that "love," and "keep those commandments?" Surely not. Must we not rather believe that, when our blessed Lord particularly prayed that his disciples should remain united, in order that the world might believe, that God had sent him, he had in view that very scandal, which our divisions and our contentions have excited; and of which, as I have before mentioned, the adversaries of our faith have so amply availed themselves; and that he was shewing a par-

* John xv. 14. 10.

ticular anxiety, that so great a stumbling block should not exist?

To some of my audience I shall, probably, appear as having spent some time, and a great many words, very unnecessarily, in proving that which is so plain, as not to be open to controversy. To others, however, I may appear to have been faulty for a reason almost directly opposite. I shall be thought to have been laying a great deal of stress upon what is, in fact, of no consequence; upon what they conceive to be not even a fair subject for any question. Many there are who will be surprised, and who will revolt at any argument which tends to shew, that it is not left to the arbitrary will or caprice of any man to worship God after that mode which is most agreeable to his imagination. They will look upon it as a novelty to be told (what yet is the old and true doctrine) that to that sound part of Christ's church, which is established in the country where he was born, or where the providence of God has fixed him, he is bound to adhere; that to all its ordinances in indifferent matters, all those rules, which it has directed to be observed, for the purpose of edification, it is his duty to conform; that he who separates from such a particular church, does it at his peril; that he is committing an act, for which he must be seriously and deeply accountable at the day of judgment;

that, in short, schism, independently of all considerations of doctrine, though it should be no part of its object to work any express corruption of the truth, is in itself a grievous and a heinous sin; hurtful in the greatest degree to the general interests of Christianity, and big with the most serious consequences to the individual.

That, when I affirm this, I am treading upon tender ground; that this is a position which has for some time past, by many persons, been considered as obsolete; and hardly so accredited, as to make it necessary for any sectary to combat, or even to notice it, I am fully aware. But I feel, also, that this only makes it the more incumbent upon those who are the appointed teachers of the word to maintain and enforce it. It is for that very purpose, among others, that a standing ministry was instituted; it was ordained with that very intent, that whatever changes took place in the minds of the great body of Christians, there should be a particular and chosen number, who should be constantly upon the watch, lest either any part of that which is sound and true doctrine should be lost, or any new and unfounded tenet should be introduced. It is also more especially the end for which these and similar lectures have been founded. It was foreseen that, in the variety of changes to which all human affairs are

liable, and by which the opinions, as well as the worldly circumstances of men are so materially affected, it might happen that great and culpable indifference might prevail upon the more important and material points of our religion; and that it might require an extraordinary degree or sort of exertion, either to keep them in remembrance and preserve them in their full vigour; or, in the case of their being neglected and forgotten, to bring them again into light, and to claim for them their due rank and estimation. And most surely to me, in the present instance, it must be conceded, that when the pious founder of this lecture directed that it might be preached for the confutation of schismatics, as well as of heretics, he did not consider schism as a light and trivial matter; he did not conceive that it was left to the caprice or whim of every man, whether he should join in communion with the national church or no. I may be allowed to conjecture, that perhaps it was the very lukewarmness upon this subject, which he saw creeping as it were over the church, and infecting and neutralizing many of those whose duty it was to be most active in opposing its effects, which caused him to insert this particular direction for its being noted and confuted.

For it is most certain, as I have before declared, that it was not always so. It will be

evident to any man who will look back into history, only so far as the beginning of the last century, that, down to that time, the guilt of schism was considered as so heinous that it was loudly deprecated or disclaimed by all parties. How it has happened that, by degrees, the dread of such an imputation has diminished, till at last it has dwindled almost into nothing, and has ceased even to be thought of, may also, as I conceive, be tolerably well accounted for by those who will consider the change which has taken place in the situation of the church, and the nature of the adversaries which she has had to contend with, from the period which I have mentioned down to the present moment.

I shall perhaps, before I go farther, be called upon to state what I mean, whether I would set up an "absolute"* authority in the church;

* Those readers who are conversant with the Bangorian controversy, of which I shall have more to say by and by, will recollect how much turned upon the use of this same word "absolute," in Bishop Hoadly's famous sermon upon John xviii. 36. As nobody, that is, no protestant claimed, or has ever claimed such an "absolute" authority, it was evident that if that was all which the bishop was contending against, he was in fact but fighting a shadow. The supposition was indeed contrary to the general tenour of the sermon, as well as his other writings, and therefore it was more than suspected that it was a mere after-thought of the bishop's, in order to shelter himself from animadversion. William Law in his first letter, plainly shews that the bishop's arguments "conclude as "strongly against all authority as against that which is absolute." It was in fact asserted that the word "absolute" was inserted by the

whether I would contend that under no circumstances whatever, a man may lawfully separate from the established communion? Undoubtedly, I claim no such infallibility for any church: undoubtedly, there may be circumstances which will not only excuse but justify such a separation. The case of the Reformation alone would suffice to establish this point. But then, whenever such a separation takes place, there must be guilt somewhere. If he who separates is innocent and justifiable, then he who has so acted as to oblige his brother to separate from him is the person guilty and liable to the judgment. It is not therefore and cannot be strictly true, that (always understanding the case of there being a national church established) there can be a separation which is not schismatical and sinful, and for which there will not be some one or other to answer as a criminal.

If I am told that, in laying down this position, I am uncharitable, I can only say that I know no difference in the main between this and any other sin. Every man, who, in any instance, disbelieves or disregards God's commandments, is guilty of sin and liable to punishment. But schism appears to me most evi-

bishop after the sermon had been preached; and a curious controversy arose out of it, which kept the city of London in a ferment for some days. See an account of it in the Biographia Britannica, Art. Kennet (White), and in Bishop Hoadly's Works, Vol. II. p. 430.

dently, judging from the express words of Scripture, to be an instance of such disregard; and, if I am right in so conceiving, we are not to suppose that it will be dealt with in a different manner from any other sin. If it be urged that schism may be produced by prejudice or ignorance, which is invincible, and the effect of circumstances, I must say that this is as likely to be the case of heresy or infidelity; the latter of which, at least, no one will deny to be a sin. I admit, what must necessarily be admitted, that there are different degrees of guilt which may be incurred by different persons in the commission of the same sin; there are circumstances which will extenuate, some perhaps which, in the eye of a merciful God, will wholly take away the guilt of it: but this does not make it to be no sin in itself. The ancients avowedly made great allowances for those who were born of schismatical parents, and in the midst of a schismatical or heretical congregation*. I am perfectly ready to go as far as any of them ever went, nay as any man can go, in hoping and trusting that the conduct of these and of every other separatist will be judged with the greatest possible mildness and favour. But still, though you take as many such individuals as you will, though you sup-

* See Bingham, Vol. ii. p. 23. fol. Ed.

pose them all, if you will, to be thus absolved, this does no way alter the nature of the thing: it will still continue to be sinful; and this will be no warrant for any man to enter into a schism, or to continue in it, under the confidence that he shall eventually escape condemnation. Indeed I will venture to say, that, in some respects, schismatics appear to be more directly sinful than heretics, or even than infidels. They have less to say for themselves. Their conduct seems particularly wanton and without cause. That I may not appear more rash and singular than is necessary, let me be allowed here to plead the authority of some of the most respected fathers of the church, whose very sentiments and almost language I have used. They say directly that schism is as bad or worse than heresy, or than idolatry; and one of them asserts that the prevalence of it is the reason why the power of working miracles had ceased in the church[3].

[3] The reader who doubts this may refer to Hammond on schism, c. 1. I will add a few passages from Austin and Chrysostom. The former in his Treatise contra Epistolam Parmeniani, Tom. ix. p. 13. ed. Antwerp, as well as elsewhere, adduces and relies upon that opinion of Cyprian, that a schismatic could not be a real martyr, and he reasons from our Lord's words in Matt. v. 10. "Blessed are "they who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake;" which he denies to be the case with schismatics. "Ideo," says he, "Dominus, "ne quisquam in hâc re nebulas offenderet imperitis, et in suorum "damnatione meritorum laudem quæreret martyrum, non generaliter

But this was not only the language of remote antiquity: it continued to be the doctrine of

" ait, beati qui persecutionem patiuntur: sed addidit magnam differentiam, quâ vera sacrilegio pietas secernatur. Ait enim, beati " qui persecutionem patiuntur propter justitiam. Nullo modo autem " propter justitiam, qui Christi ecclesiam diviserunt, etc." So in Libro de Baptismo contra Donatistas, he calls it "sacrilege" repeatedly; "nefariæ divisionis sacrilegium," p. 49. "Schismatis " sacrilegio," p. 50 "Sacrilegia schismata," ibidem. "Sacrilegium " schismatis, quod omnia scelera supragraditur," p. 10. And he says none can be guilty of it "nisi aut superbiæ tumore furiosos, " aut invidentiæ livore vesanos, aut sæculari commoditate corruptos, " aut carnali timore perversos," p. 50. That schismatics are worse than idolaters he argues from their punishment in the Old Testament; that the one was slain with the sword, while the other was swallowed up alive in the earth. "Idololatras enim in populo " Dei gladius interemit, schismaticos autem terræ hiatus absorbuit," p. 57. And he expressly ascribes the origin of schism to the want of charity. "Nulli schismata facerent nisi fraterno odio non ex- " cæcarentur," p. 59. And after citing 1 John ii. 11, he says, "An " non in schismate odium fraternum? Quis hoc dixerit, cum et " origo et pertinacia schismatis nulla sit alia nisi odium fratris?" ibidem. Chrysostom in his homily on Ephes. iv. cites with approbation that saying of Cyprian with respect to martyrdom. He says too that nothing so contributes to cause divisions in the church as ambition; and nothing so provokes the anger of God as for his church to be divided. "Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἐκκλησίαν δυνήσεται " διαιρεῖν, ὡς φιλαρχία· οὐδὲν οὕτω παροξύνει τὸν θεὸν, ὡς τὴν " ἐκκλησίαν διαιρεθῆναι." And he adds that though we should do a thousand good works, "κἂν μυρία ὦμεν ἐργασάμενοι καλὰ" we should not escape the punishment due to a breach of the unity of the church. Tom. xi. p. 86. Ed. Bened. See also what he says afterwards of schism not being a crime at all inferior to heresy, διὰ τοῦτο λέγω καὶ διαμαρτύρομαι, ὅτι τοῦ εἰς αἵρεσιν ἐμπεσεῖν τὸ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν χίσαι οὐκ ἔλαττόν ἐστι κακόν, p. 88. And in Tom. vii. p. 375 in his homily on Matt. x. 16. he points out the reason

the church at large, through succeeding ages. It was the strong and declared opinion of our national church in particular, at that period to which we are all in the habit of looking, when she virtually, nay, actually separated from the church of Rome; when therefore she might have spared herself and the rest of the reformed churches much trouble, when she and they might at once have set themselves above the reach of obloquy and censure, if they could have maintained the broad ground, that there was no guilt in schism, and that neither churches nor individuals were bound to have fellowship with each other in matters of religion. She still, however, maintained the old doctrine, she still reproved and taxed with guilt all those individuals who separated from their proper churches, and all those churches who refused to communicate with each other

why miracles have ceased to be, lest any man having such extraordinary powers should thereby be puffed up and led to separate himself from the church: since he says, this is even now the case with those who are eminent for other gifts, εἰ γὰρ οὐ ζήνομένων σημείων αἱ πλεονεκτήμασιν ἑτέροις κομῶντες, οἷονεὶ λόγῳ σοφίᾳ, ἢ εὐλαβείας ἐπιδείξει, κενοδοξοῦσιν, ἐπαίρονται, ἀπ' ἀλλήλων χείζονται εἰ καὶ σημεῖα ἐγένοντο, που οὐκ ἂν ἐγένετο ῥήγματα; and he alleges as a proof what happened among the Corinthians. It is remarkable too that Chrysostom rather goes out of his way to give this opinion, as his text only required him to speak generally of the blessings of peace; which shews the more strongly how much he was impressed with the idea that ambition and vanity were the prevalent causes of schism.

without the most evident and weighty reasons. She, as well as the rest, held it to be incumbent upon those who so separated to shew that the terms of communion imposed by the church from which the separation was made were actually sinful; either as being in themselves contrary to the word of God, or as by manifest consequence directly leading to evil. Of both these sorts of terms there were numberless and gross instances to be found in the practice and discipline of the Romish church. The schism therefore lay not at their door, but belonged to those, who, by admitting and giving currency to such enormous abuses had made it both dangerous and sinful to remain in their society.

Such were the allegations of the church of England at that memorable time, when, by the grace of God, she was enabled to tread back her steps, and disencumber herself of that load of superstition, under which, in common with the great body of Christians, she had so long groaned; and when she shook off the yoke which under the most impudent and fraudful pretences, had been imposed upon her by a succession of artful and designing usurpers. When afterwards a number of her sons, having been driven by persecution into foreign countries, had unfortunately imbibed a partiality for other forms of discipline in preference to those which she had adopted, and caused the first schism

which took place amoug protestants in this kingdom, neither did these very men contend for that unbounded latitude of every man's worshipping God after his own way. They professed to act upon scruples of conscience; to be persuaded that the Reformation had not gone far enough; that much of popish abomination yet remained behind, of which it was necessary that the church should be purged; and which they assigned as the cause why they could not join in her communion. This was carried so far, and so acted upon by these puritans, that when, in the time of the great rebellion, they came to have the upper hand, they fully shewed themselves to have been in earnest. For they not only established for themselves a mode of worship more devoid of ceremonies and more plain in every respect: not only they destroyed, as far as related to its temporal existence, the hierarchy of the church, by voting bishops to be useless, but they absolutely forbad under considerable penalties any man's making use of our liturgy. To popery and prelacy, which they most unwarrantably yoked together, they denied that toleration which they were not disinclined to extend, and which was in fact extended to all other, even the most extravagant sects. By the very persecution which they carried on against the church, they declared in the plainest terms, though in a way

which was neither just nor decent, their conviction, or opinion at least, that there was a substantial and conscientious cause for their separation. They did, as our church had done before, throw the guilt of the schism upon those from whom they separated.

This was still more apparent, when, upon the restoration of monarchy, and of the church, these same men who had, under the usurped government, obtained possession of most of the livings in the kingdom, were required to conform to the rites and ordinances of the church, under pain of being ejected from their preferments; when almost the whole of them chose rather to relinquish their situations than to make the subscriptions required. For what was then their language? They complained bitterly of the bishops and other rulers of the church, as having devised such terms of communion as they could not in conscience comply with; they deplored the separation, to which they were thus, as they said, driven; but repeatedly and loudly protested that the schism was none of theirs*. At the conferences which

* This is done in the strongest language by Peirce in his "Vindi-"cation of the Dissenters," published in 1717. "After the church "of England, being led by a schismatical rage, ejected her ministers, "&c." Part 1. p. 283. "We have all along desired peace, and "will still most cheerfully embrace it, as soon as the *unrighteous conditions* which now obstruct it are removed." Ibidem, p. 285. After

took place at the Savoy (as before at that which took place before king James at Hampton Court) the dissenting ministers agreed most fully with the dignitaries of the church in their ideas of not only the advantage, but the duty of being united. The same doctrine continued to be held by them and their successors for many years after. Not only in their general professions, but in particular sermons delivered and published by them, they continued to urge the necessity of unity in the church, and the sin of those who caused any breach in that unity.

So late as the beginning of the last century, the question was agitated with great warmth and zeal; in particular between a very respectable divine of our church, and certain dissenters in his neighbourhood; and whatever might be the merits of the case in other respects, it is most evident that both sides proceeded upon

wards, speaking of the use of the surplice and ceremonies, he says, "Since the things themselves are useless, if they are lawful, they "who join in them, and without any necessity give an occasion of "offence to their brethren, and for such a trifling matter deprive "them of their ministry, as though they were unfit for the sacred "office, nay, and rend the mystical body of Christ for a thing of "nought, must deservedly be reckoned guilty of a grievous sin," Part iii. p. 190. He says too (Part ii. p. 2.) that the episcopal clergy "are guilty of schism, out of a certain dread of it." Peirce's book was considered as a book of great authority among the Dissenters.

the assumption, that schism was a dangerous and damnable sin[b].

[b] See Bennet's Essay on Schism; c. vii. where he shews that "schism is a damnable sin in the judgment of the (then) present "dissenting ministers." That Dr. Bennet had the better of the argument, we need no other proof than the admission of Dr. Kippis, (a well-known Socinian dissenter), in his note, Art. BENNET in the last edition of his Biographia Britannica; who tells us, that Dr. Bennett met with *insufficient* adversaries; and that "he "(the writer) remembers being told in his youth, by Dr. Phil. Doddridge, that the dissenting ministers in and about Colchester, "who endeavouredto answer Dr. Bennet, and particularly Mr. Shepherd, were persons of very mean talents." Supposing the fact were admitted; yet, as the question was a general one, and Dr. Bennet's book went through several editions, it may be asked, why some more able adversary from some other place, did not give the doctor a better answer. There follows a paragraph, which as it coroborates my assertions with respect to fact; and also gives the great plea of the dissenters for non-conformity, it may be material to subjoin. "The question concerning schism," adds Dr. K. "was deemed of "great importance during the last century, and the beginning of the "present, (that is, the eighteenth). The papists charged this "crime upon the protestants, and the members of the church of "England upon the dissenters; and the parties attacked, recrimi-"nated in their turn. In these more libera times, it will be con-"fessed by all, except some recluse bigots, that a man who sin-"cerely worships God according to the dictates of his own con-"science, *in any Christian assembly*, is an object of salvation." Upon this I need not make any observation, having considered this position in Sermon III. only I must observe, that the qualification here introduced by the doctor, which I have printed in Italics, could hardly have been maintained by him without some prejudice to his general principle. I have only further to notice a most ingenious artifice employed by the doctor in this note, and common indeed, among the Socinians. Speaking of Dr. Bennet's tracts in favour of the Trinity, he calls it "defending Athanasianism;" thus employing a term of modern invention, for the purpose of insinuating that

From that time, I admit, as I have said before, that this opinion of the great guilt of schism has very much lost its hold on the minds,

the doctrine of the Trinity is no older than Athanasius; an insinuation not only unfounded in fact, but repeatedly shown to be so, and solemnly repelled by every writer on that side of the question. It is indeed, a term so improper in every respect, that it was reserved for the Socinians of the present age to bring it forward. This is, however, outdone in unfairness by a Mr. Evans; who, having published an account of the different sects of Christianity, characterises the "Trinitarians" by an opinion of Dr. Priestley, making them in fact Sabellians or Tritheists; and immediately subjoins the "Athanasians" as a distinct denomination; under which the Church of England is impliedly, though not by name, attempted to be stigmatized,

I might adduce further, in corroboration of what I have stated in the text, the controversy between bishop (then Mr.) Hoadly and Dr. Calamy, on non-conformity, which equally proceeded upon the admission of the great evil of schism. To put it in Bishop Hoadly's words, who was tender enough upon the subject, it was agreed on all hands, "That all causeless and unnecessary "divisions and distinctions, are most carefully and conscientiously "to be avoided by all Christians." Reasonableness of conformity, p. 289, duod. edit. and again, p. 479, "That regularity is not to "be neglected without a great necessity, is my principle; and this "author," (that is Calamy) "has said the same over and over "again." What Bishop Hoadly so tenderly calls "neglecting "regularity" the Apostles would probably have called "troubling "the church." However, Hoadly beat Calamy on his own principles, and I think this is fairly to be deduced from what Calamy himself says of the end of this controversy. "I drew up a reply "to it" (the defence of episcopal ordination) "both as to the "historical and argumentative part, in a letter to the author, but "forebore printing it *that I might not give him disturbance in the pursuit "of his political contest, in which he is so happily engaged, and so much to "the satisfaction of the true lovers of his country.* We must believe that Dr. Calamy had no great confidence in a cause which he

of perhaps, a majority in this nation. It has even ceased to be much debated, and other ideas more lax, and more conformable to the liberality so much professed in these times, have taken its place. But surely, if we trace the commencement, as well as the progress of this change, we shall see no room to be convinced that this new mode of thinking is preferable to the old. It took its rise, or, at least, it appeared first to gather strength from an event, which, though in the beginning it might be said to concern only a few individuals, very soon, by the co-operation of other causes, became extremely general and extended in its effects.

The circumstance to which I allude, is the celebrated controversy which arose about or soon after that time; and which was occasioned by certain positions maintained and promulgated by an eminent prelate of that day; the tendency of which (as it was not without good reason objected to him) appeared to be to encourage all manner of divisions, by inviting every man to follow the bent of his own fancy in the choice of his communion; and by declaring against every species of authority in the

abandoned upon such grounds. What he had to say, he has set down shortly in the place from which the above passage is extracted: Abridgment of Baxter's life, p. 713—18, and I believe it will shew I am not wrong in my supposition.

church[6]. There were not wanting many very able and learned divines to come forward in the refutation of such opinions; and that it was done with great success—nay, with an unanswerable force of argument, has been generally enough acknowledged[7]. But there were cir-

[6] At this distance of time it may not be altogether unnecessary to mention, that the Bangorian controversy was occasioned by two productions of Bishop Hoadly, the one, "a Preservative against "the Principles and Practices of the Non-jurors both in Church and "State," printed in 1716; the other, "a Sermon on the Nature of "the Kingdom or Church of Christ," preached before the King, and published by command. As to the latter of which, the Bishop himself says, "At whose request it was commanded to be publish-"ed, I know not; but I know that it was not either directly or "indirectly from any desire of mine." (Pref. to vol. of Sermons 1754) Against certain positions contained in these publications, a complaint was instituted in the lower house of convocation, which being referred to a committee, a representation was drawn up, reprobating them in very strong terms. But after it was received, and nem. con. voted to be entered on the books of the house, Bishop Hoadly's friends, as is well understood, procured the prorogation of the convocation in order to shelter him from the censure, which he would otherwise hardly have avoided. The bishop indeed disclaims. (Pref. to answer to the representation of the committee) having solicited or even known or suspected any such design, till it was actually resolved and ordered. He adds however, "It" (the prorogation) "neither tends to hinder any *light* from "appearing, which possibly can be procured, nor can it have such "effect in its *consequences*, but the contrary. For the debate is by "this means taken from the bar of *human authority*, and brought to "that of *reason* and *scripture*: removed from a trial by a *majority of* "*voices* (which cannot be a trial contended for either by *truth* or "by the *Church of England*) and brought to that of *argument* "only."

[7] This may, I think, not unreasonably be collected even from

cumstances, which, independently of the merits of the question, tended to give weight and prevalency to the sentiments thus brought forward aud supported by Bishop Hoadly and his adherents. The very circumstance which had occasioned the question to be agitated, secured to him a considerable degree of favour with a very large party in the nation, and the decided patronage of the persons that were then at the head of the government. This was the scrupulousness, extreme, it may be allowed, and too nice, of certain of our divines, who, however they disapproved, and had even resisted the designs of James the second against the church[s], yet conceived themselves to be

the language of one of the bishop's strongest partisans. A continuation of the account of all the pamphlets relating to this controversy by Thomas Hearn, M. A. was published in 1720, which concludes thus. "Let me add one general observation; that "though the principles maintained by my Lord of Bangor do "appear to be the only ones upon which our reformation, or "indeed any reformation can be justifiable; though they evidently tend to justify christianity from the objections that are unanswerable by those, who contend for the contradictory principles, such as that it makes God a being acting not by reason, "&c. Though this and much more be true, yet the number of "those who appear in public opposition to him increases: as fast "as former ones are baffled, new ones of higher stations, and "greater dignity succeed, whilst many who are of the same "sentiments with him content themselves with being well-wishers "to his cause; and except those who first sided with him, few "openly appear to his assistance," &c. See Hoadly's works, vol. 1. p. 710.

[s] This was particularly the case with five (if I mistake not) of

so bound by the oath of allegiance which they had taken to him, that they could not, during his life, transfer that allegiance to any other sovereign; and they in consequence declined acknowledging his successor. This brought on the expulsion of them from their bishoprics and other perferments; and, as they still persisted in considering themselves as the rightful pastors in the several cures to which they had been instituted, occasion was given to a contest, which though in itself purely religious, yet was made naturally enough to bear upon the politics of the day. The assertion of an ecclesiastical authority independent of the civil power was conceived, by the adminstration then existing, to be of a dangerous tendency, and they were not backward therefore to support those who came forward in opposition to such claims. The mode however which was adopted by the then bishop of Bangor for the combating of these pretensions, well or ill-founded, must be admitted to have been somewhat extraordinary for one, who was by his office, an established ruler in the church. Not

the seven bishops. It is remarkable too, that Leslie, who was the most violent (perhaps) of the non-jurors in favour of the pretender, had early in his life very strenuously opposed an illegal attempt of James the second to appoint a popish sheriff for a county of Ireland, where he was an acting justice of the peace. V. Biog. Brit. Art. LESLIE.

content to argue against any abuse or misconception of authority, he proceeded at once to deny that there was any authority whatever given by Christ to any person to rule or to govern his church: he asserted that what our Lord said of "his kingdom not being of this world" was to be taken most strictly, as interdicting every man from being a judge or lawgiver in religious matters; and thus he, by necessary inference, condemned or materially impeached the very establishment in which he held so distinguished a situation[9].

Inconsistent as this conduct might appear, yet while the doctrine was patronized by the government, and the supporters of it were rewarded with the preferments and the dignities, of which they thus seemed to doubt the propriety, it is no wonder that the tenet should have continued to gain ground. It was more particularly received with great favour by the dissenters, with many of whose positions it not only agreed, but even seemed in a great degree to be borrowed from them. It further opened to them a prospect of being set at liber-

[9] It is true the bishop afterwards endeavoured to explain away or to narrow his positions, but it was clearly shewn by his opponents that this could not be done without destroying the whole of his argument. See particularly William Law's third letter, under the head of "A remarkable evasion of your lordship's in relation to church authority."

ty from those restraints to which by the policy of the civil legislature they had been subjected; and they appear from that time to have shewn a disposition to unite as one body in their general views of hostility against the national church.

In consequence of this too, and in order to preserve consistency in the maintenance of the doctrine, the Arians and Socinians began from that time also to be taken into favour by the other dissenters; and were admitted by them to be entitled to the same degree of indulgence and the same privileges as the other sects.

How far this was from being the case with their predecessors, no man who has looked ever so superficially into ecclesiastical history, can be ignorant. From the earliest appearance of the puritans down to the times of Baxter, and even of his biographer Calamy, the Socinians, and all those who denied the proper divinity of our Lord, were considered as hardly deserving even to be classed among Christians. Calvin, it is notorious, shewed it by causing Servetus to be burned, and Baxter spoke of Biddle's followers as men who were little better than Deists or Infidels[10]. In the toleration act passed

[10] "The *Socinians* also in these times made some increase by the "means of one Mr. Biddle, sometime schoolmaster in Gloucester, "who wrote against the godhead of the *Holy Ghost*, and afterwards of "*Christ*. His followers inclined much to mere *Deism* and *Infidelity*."

under King William, a clause was inserted requiring a subscription expressly calculated to exclude this class of sectaries from taking advantage of its provisions; and by another statute it was declared to be an offence highly penal to deny the godhead of any of the persons of the blessed trinity; as also to affirm that there is more than one God[11]. To neither of which enactments was any opposition made by the dissenters of those days, nor did they shew the least apprehension that they could ever become subject to the penalties which were thus imposed. Not long after this, however, the consequences of their own principles, when pushed to the utmost, began to press upon them,[12] and they or most of them manifested a

Calamy's abridgment of Baxter's life, Vol. 1. p. 104. Peirce in his Vindication of Dissenters blames the churchmen as too easy in this respect. "Why," says he, "do they not, as well as we, keep "*heretics* and profligate sinners out of their communion." Part iii. p. 273.

[11] This was extended to the Quakers. Vid. Stat. 1. W. & M. c. xviii. sec. 13. and 9. and 10. W. iii. c. *32*.

[12] "Among the many clamours raised about this time (anno "1704) among the *Dissenters*, one was that they did not deserve "to have *liberty* themselves, because they were enemies to the "*liberty* of others. This was started as a maxim that they that "would be for straining others if they were able, could not reasonably expect *liberty* from those that were in power, when they "differed from them. I shall not set myself to debate this maxim "or consider what might be objected to it; but shall let the world "understand that the Dissenters took another way to answer it, "&c." Calamy's abridgment of Baxter's Life, Vol. i. p 670. The

disposition to unite with all sectaries without any distinction of doctrine any more than of discipline. But as some of them continued to think that the proper atonement of our Saviour, and of course his divinity, were articles of faith essentially interwoven with Christianity, this was not carried either universally or without opposition[15]; though it is now I believe very generally entertained.

way taken was to write a letter to some ministers of reputation in *New England* on behalf of the Quakers, who complained of some severe laws of a long standing, not repealed, from which they desired to be screened. The letter was signed by several of the other *three* denominations of Dissenters: I suppose Presbyterian, Independent, and Socinian. If it was so, this was a beginning of union.

[15] Dr. Kippis in the last edition of the Biographia Britannica, Art. CALAMY, (Edmund) speaks of this event and particularly of Dr. Edmund Calamy's conduct at the time, in the following words:—"In the great disputes which were carried on among the "Dissenters in 1718 and the following years, concerning subscrip-"tion to the first article of the church of England, relative to the "doctrine of the trinity, Dr. Calamy acted a neutral part. He "distinctly foresaw the quarrel and its consequences; and before "it rose to an height, took up a resolution to have no hand in it. "He was indeed at one private meeting, but saw so much there, "as determined him to engage no farther, though he was earnestly "pressed both by the subscribers, and those who were afterwards "called the non-subscribers, to give them his company. We be-"lieve that most of the present race of dissenting clergy will think "that Dr. Calamy lost some credit by not being one of the seventy "three ministers who carried it against sixty-nine for the bible "in opposition to human formularies." I have never met any where with further particulars of this transaction, by which as it seems the presbyterians and independents formally agreed to give

From that time, indeed, the opinions of Arius and Socinus began to acquire a degree of credit not only greater than they had ever possessed, but in a quarter where it might least have been expected, even in the bosom of the church. The learned and ingenious prelate, of whom we have been speaking, was by many persons supposed to be much inclined to the Socinian tenets[14]. Another extremely eminent, and otherwise respectable divine put forth such an

the right hand of fellowship to the Socinians. Nor am I aware what were "the quarrel and its consequences" which followed. But I think there was good reason for this caution of Dr. Calamy. Possibly he remembered what his grandfather, (as quoted by his uncle Benjamin) had said, that "he that separates from the "public worship, is like a man tumbling down a hill, and never "leaving till he comes to the bottom of it. I could relate," he goes on, "many sad stories of persons professing godliness, who "out of dislike to our church-meetings began at first to separate "from them, and after many changes and alterations are turned "some of them anabaptist, some quakers, some ranters, some di-"rect atheists!" Ib. Art. Calamy (Benjamin.) Note A.

[14] In the Biographia Britannica, art. HOADLY, it is supposed that this charge rests merely upon his "account of Dr. Clarke, "and his extraordinary veneration for that divine;" but this is an evident, if not a wilful mistake. When I say wilful, I mean it with a reference to what is said afterwards of the plain account of the sacrament, that "it was not unjustly said to have met with "much warm and weak opposition." The man who wrote this must, or should therefore have known that upon that publication more than any other, was founded, the impeachment of his lordship's orthodoxy respecting the divinity of our Saviour. As this is a point of some consequence and that may well deserve to be considered at length, I must refer my readers for further particulars to additional note A.

account of his ideas of the trinity, as naturally operated to fix upon him the charge of Arianism[15]. The same heresy was maintained at the same time, without any disguise, by the learned and pious, but wild and extravagant William Whiston[16]. Nearer to our days, a bishop of the church of Ireland in a pamphlet, anonymous indeed, but acknowledged or understood to be his, declared unreservedly for that opinion[17]. And the taking away of all subscriptions was urged by another dignitary of our church upon such latitudinarian principles as would have set open the door to every the wildest

[15] That Dr. Clarke's ideas of the trinity were not those of our church is so fully agreed on all hands that it is unnecessary to say more on the subject at present. This indeed was put still more out of all doubt by his corrections of the liturgy, deposited by his son in the British Museum: (see his article in the Biog. Britannica) and of which Mr. Lindsay has made a considerable use in his Apology.

[16] For the doctrines of this learned and worthy, but very eccentric writer, see his Memoirs, which are written in a style of uncommon plainness and sincerity. His great text book was the apostolical constitutions which I believe no other learned man in our days has contended to be genuine. Whiston's son was subject to temporary derangements of mind; and when he found the fit coming upon him, used to go, and voluntarily put himself under the care of a medical gentleman till the disorder was removed.

[17] See additional note B. for particulars of this publication and its consequences, as well as Bishop Clayton's principles and conduct.

theory[18]. This may account, in some degree, for what might otherwise appear a most extraordinary measure, the formal application to Parliament in the year 1772 from a numerous body of the established clergy, praying for what they called relief upon this subject: and although no great degree of favour was shewn to the petition, yet it could not but add strength and currency to the arguments which continued to be advanced by the dissenters for the taking away of all distinctions in respect of religious opinions. It must also be obvious that all these descriptions of persons must of course be disposed to reject the doctrine that schism was in any way criminal or sinful. And, in fact, their common manner of treating the subject has been to represent every idea of that kind as being not only illiberal, but unchristian. This has been particularly the case with the writers of the Socinian, or, as they call themselves, the Unitarian heresy. It suits particularly that sect, which has all along contended for, and indeed subsisted upon the widest possible latitude in understanding as well as interpreting, nay admitting or rejecting, the holy scriptures; which peculiarly professes to oppose every argument from authority, however built

[18] It is hardly necessary to mention Archdeacon Blackburne in his Confessional and other tracts.

upon the remotest antiquity; and admits of no doctrine, however plainly laid down in the revealed word of God, if not clearly reducible to certain pre-conceived ideas of right and justice. These principles so distinctly encourage and set up a private and independent judge in every man's breast, that they cannot also but allow of and sanction the utmost possible difference of opinion. Of course, where there is so little reason for individuals remaining joined together, there can be no good ground for complaining against any of their brethren who shall chuse to make a further separation upon principles of their own devising[19].

But farther, it is curious (and this brings me to the last circumstance memorable in this revolution of men's opinions respecting ecclesiastical authority) it is, I say, particularly curious that this extreme laxity of opinion upon

[19] As has evidently been the case, among others, with Priestley, Evanson and Wakefield; the two former of whom have outstripped all who have gone before them in the liberties which they have taken with the scriptures; and the last in rejecting social worship. I was not aware that this last tenet had gained so much ground. But I see it mentioned in a periodical work, (Gent. Mag. for Dec. 1807, p. 1128) that on that account we must not estimate the number of Socinians from the number of their chapels, there being a great proportion of that sect who upon this principle of Wakefield's, absent themselves from all places of public worship. This will serve to prove, among numerous other instances, to what length the spirit of non-conformity will go when it is fully let loose.

the most important tenets of christianity (prevailing whether in or out of the church) has, by a sort of revulsion, given rise to another sect, as decidedly schismatical, but proceeding upon the directly opposite extreme in point of doctrine. The Socinians, as well as the Arians, though these last in a less degree, denying the atonement made by Christ for our sins, and asserting our sufficiency to merit salvation by our own good works only, must of course confine, or principally direct their preaching to what is called the moral part of the law. This must also have been the practice of those among our clergy, who leant to the same opinions: and possibly it may have happened to some of the body who were strictly orthodox, to dwell more frequently upon the purely practical, than upon what is by many considered, though falsely, as the speculative part of religion. Whether this did, in fact, take place to any extent, it is not perhaps easy to ascertain[20]; but, upon the supposition that it had obtained not only in a great degree but almost universally, about

[20] I profess myself perfectly unable to ascertain this: and therefore I speak only on the report of the sectaries themselves. I find none of our divines of that time backward to insist upon the peculiar doctrines of christianity; certainly not the non-jurors. But as Bishop Hoadly as well as Dr. Clarke had many partizans, under the denomination of the low church, it is not unlikely but that among them some such deficiency, as was pretended, may have been found.

half a century ago, there arose in the very bosom of this university another sect, pretending that there was a necessity for a new and more zealous ministry, in order to enforce and disseminate the true faith in Christ, which they declared had been shamefully neglected and abused. Of these men, who made themselves known to the world under the name of methodists, it is not necessary at this moment to say much, as the existence of them and the influence which they have gained over the minds, chiefly of the more ignorant and lower sort of mankind, are sufficiently notorious. What is remarkable, is, that in doctrine, they profess most completely to hold with the church of England; nay, the boast of their founders was, that they were in strict conformity to her articles, while the regular clergy daily departed from them. Their leaders too had received ordination from our bishops. This makes them, or, at least, made them, in the beginning, more purely schismatical than most of the dissenters of whom we have been speaking. Another circumstance worthy of notice is, that in their peculiarities of doctrine for the adoption of which we conceive them to be blameable, as putting a wrong construction upon some of our articles, they also have their favourers among the regularly ordained,

and officiating ministers of the church. So that, in this case also, there has not been wanting precisely the same sort of encouragement and countenance as has, according to what we before observed, been enjoyed by the other separatists. Here again, therefore, we shall meet, where we might least have looked for it, with a considerable body, who are either the patrons of schism, or who will be disposed to look upon it, if not openly to treat it with indifference[21].

In laying before you thus early, and perhaps somewhat out of its order, this account of what I conceive to have been the state of the church during the progress of the revolution which has taken place in men's minds respecting the subject which I am discussing, I have had in view two objects: first, to remove from myself that prejudice which might have been entertained by any of you as if in arguing so seriously against schism, and labouring to prevent the extension of it, I were attempting some new thing, and pursuing ideas of my own: and, secondly, to lead you, from the actual situation in which we stand, and the numerous enemies with which our ecclesiastical establishment is, as it were, beset or hemmed in, to consider whether this be not an evil of such

[21] See additional note C. for these gentlemen's own account of themselves.

magnitude and pressure as requires to be resisted with all the vigilance, and all the powers which Providence has bestowed upon us.

Such being my individual persuasion, I intend, with God's help, to lay before you in some detail the argument against schism, as it is to be collected from scripture: both as it is found in express reasoning and precept, and also as it is supported by facts and examples. Upon this certainly, as upon the corner stone, do I propose to build; feeling that "no other "foundation can man lay." I shall however confirm this by shewing the manifest tendency of schism, not only to disturb the peace of the church, but also to corrupt her doctrine; this too made more plain by instances, which the history of christianity will amply supply.

And, because it has been a favourite topic with dissenters of all sorts to insist upon our separation from the church of Rome as if it precluded us from objecting to their, or any other separation from our church, I shall pretty much at large shew the difference of the two cases; and prove that not only our church was fully justified in what she then did, but that the reformation can be a precedent only in cases where to have remained in communion with those from whom the separation is made would be sinful. That this therefore can never justify those men, who can allege no actual

sinfulness in the terms of our communion; and still less those whose cause of complaint against us consists only in this, that we will not so enlarge the platform of our establishment as to comprehend all possible denominations of Christians whatever their tenets may be.

I shall moreover corroborate my position by shewing most strongly the difference of the two cases in another point of view; and protesting that the assertion and vindication of the independence of our national church, which is the first and great feature of the reformation in England, has, and can have nothing to do with justifying individuals in their separation from the established communion within whose limits or pale they have their abode, and of which they properly form a part.

But, further, I shall the more enlarge upon the subject, because I conceive that the circumstances of the times do particularly require that you should be reminded of what are the doctrines and principles by which the church of Rome is distinguished: and, when they have been thus brought to your recollection, it will be for you to consider whether they be not such as are subversive of the very foundations of christianity: whether therefore they ought not in every country to be specially guarded against: and whether there be not still a broad

distinction and peculiar line of separation which should be allowed to subsist between the Romish church on the one hand, and the great body or aggregate of protestant churches on the other.

I propose after that, to revert to the present circumstances of our church for the purpose of considering more particularly (as however, I shall have occasion to do through the whole of these discourses, and in connexion with my subject) the reasonings upon which the different bodies, who separate from her, attempt to excuse or to justify their schism; and hope from thence to be enabled to inculcate the more forcibly into those who hear me, the necessity of adhering to the precepts of our Lord and his apostles in maintaining the unity of the faith by continuing in close fellowship with one another.

It may be proper further to observe, that, although heresy be distinct from schism, yet they so naturally lead the one to the other, that I shall be necessarily led to speak of the former, though principally as being incidental to the latter, not on account of the things themselves, but as either immediately or by necessary consequence, they are equally a cause of disorder and disunion, as they conduce to disturb or break the peace of the church. They may, indeed, as we have had occasion to see,

exist separate, though it is what will very rarely happen. I have adverted to late instances in our church of heresy without schism, as there is also at this day more than one description of schismatics, who may be considered as not strictly heretical.

I should observe lastly, that the question of church government is also nearly connected with that of schism. Indeed the first is usually pre-supposed (though this be not of absolute necessity) before the latter is understood to take place. It is not however within the limits assigned me to give it any thing like the consideration which is due to its importance. Indeed this is rendered unnecessary by the many excellent treatises which have been written upon the subject; as well as by the authority which is claimed and exercised among even the most petty assemblage of the separatists themselves; who thus bear testimony to the truth of the position, that, without some sort of rule or order, it is impossible for any aggregate body of men to continue their existence for any considerable time[*].

[*] This is particularly the case with the Wesleyan methodists, who are, or were during the life of their founder, under as regular and strict a government, as the church itself; extending even to a sort of episcopal establishment. It appears indeed from some late publications, that this is kept up to a degree which is hardly credible: so that the lower orders even begin to cry out against the oppression of the superior. See Nightingale's Portraiture of Methodism, printed for Longman and Co

Still less is it my wish to say any thing which may bear upon that alliance between church and state, from whence is derived or rather by which is secured, that portion which the former inherits of wealth and of worldly honour; and which may be suspected to have caused much of the jealousy, to which she has been exposed. If it should be necessary to touch upon it, I shall not forbear, but it will be my wish to steer clear of any thing like formal discussion on that head. The appeal which I shall make, I would wish to be directed exclusively to your consciences, as followers of Christ and servants of God. I would have you consider the question not as it may affect any temporal interests of your own, or of the civil community to which you belong; but as it may concern your eternal, and spiritual welfare. I could wish this, not only because of the infinitely greater importance which belongs to heavenly things; not only because this is, and ought to be, the ultimate scope and end of all that we say in this place; but also because I am persuaded (and it is a persuasion in which I shall be joined by every considerate man, more especially at this time, if he will observe the striking characters, in which the judgments of God are displaying themselves throughout Europe) I am persuaded, I say,

that it is only by striving to conciliate the divine favour, by keeping the commandments, that we can hope to obtain any tolerable prospect, of even worldly happiness and prosperity. In this, as in all other cases, that will be found to be true, which our blessed Lord has declared; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his "righteousness, and all these things shall be "added unto you*."

* Matthew vi. 33.

SERMON II.

GAL. v. 12.

I would they were even cut off that trouble you.

WHATEVER may be the precise and appropriate meaning of these words as used by St. Paul in this place, it will not be denied me, that, in whatever way taken, they convey a most marked and severe censure upon the persons of whom they were spoken. Indeed if any doubt could remain upon the subject, it would be taken away by only referring to the paragraph almost immediately preceding. "He that troubleth "you," says the apostle, "shall bear his judg- "ment, whosoever he be," which is a denunciation of the most severe nature, whether the word there employed be taken to relate to a condemnation, or punishment in this world,

or to the judgment of that which is to come. It cannot be disputed therefore that the apostle in this case reprobated and condemned, in almost as strong terms as can be devised, the persons whom he found occasioning and exciting divisions in the churches of Galatia. We have here then, upon the first view of the thing, the deliberate sentence of a teacher confessedly inspired by the Holy Ghost, declaring, in that particular instance at least, the guilt that attaches to schism, and that it is a sin of no common magnitude. If we find moreover, as we certainly shall upon due examination, that it is not only in this place, but also in the rest, I believe I may say in all, of his epistles that St. Paul holds the same language: if we find, further, that it is the language not of St. Paul only but of every other individual among the apostles, who has left us any memorial of his sentiments in writing: we shall be led to wonder where it is that men have discovered the authority upon which they justify, or recommend the holding of a variety of opinions in the church; or from whence it is that they have conceived that such a diversity, whether of discipline or of doctrine, was acceptable to God. To hear the arguments which are adduced by some of the advocates of non-conformity, one might be led to suppose that when our Lord spoke of his bringing division-

on the earth, he intended that it should be
:en, not as an accidental circumstance arising
t of the infirmity and wickedness of man,
t as, what it is in reality, an obstacle, and a
:at one to the propagation of the gospel;
t as if it had been a natural, and an approved
ısequence of his labours, one of the means
ginally devised by God for the furtherance
l advancement of his glory. We have even
:n told to look at the infinite modifications
matter, and to observe how surprisingly
y differ from each other; and we have been
ed, whether God must not have intended
t there should be the same variety in the
ral as in the physical world. An argu-
nt this which, if pursued to the utmost,
uld prove that because the earth is subject
storms and to tempests, so the human mind
ght to be the sport of passion; which would
ke a change of temper, as natural and as
per, as the change of seasons: and which
uld undoubtedly require a heaven of a very
erent sort from that which is in reality set
ore us. These are among the fancies in
ich men choose to indulge rather than look
o the source of all wisdom. If they would
ly consult the scriptures, what, I repeat it,
uld they see in them? What, but every
rd and every act directed to bring us to that

uniformity of thinking, which, according to this mode of arguing, is considered as foreign to our nature? What indeed is the end of that gospel, to which we are called, and of the discipline to which it has subjected us in this world, but that of "casting down imaginations "and every high thing that exalteth itself "against the knowledge of God, and bringing "into captivity every thought to the obedience "of Christ*?" It is certain, I say, that the way held out to us in the scriptures as the only one proper to be pursued by us, is that of entire obedience; of perfect conformity to the will of God: and this to be accomplished by subduing our passions, and measuring our actions by one fixed standard: certainly therefore not by every man's setting up his own private opinion as the rule of his conduct, or hastily departing from what he sees to have been established. Instead of encouraging in ourselves a prejudice against what we find to have been the practice of those who have gone before us, we are on the contrary directed rather to presume that what we find established is right, and to be followed. We are to "stand in the "ways and see, and ask for the old paths; "where is the good way, and walk therein, "and we shall then find rest for our souls†."

* 2 Cor. x. 5. † Jerem. vi. 16.

Again if we look to the *end* of our labours, to "the recompence of the reward*," which is appointed for the just, the same conclusion will present itself to our minds. In that blessed state where "the tears shall be wiped from all eyes, "where there shall be no more death, neither "sorrow nor crying†;" our happiness, as far as it is disclosed to us, will not consist in any variety of pursuit; still less in any indulgence of each man's particular fancy; in any refinements of our own, in any "doubtful disputa-"tions[1];" but in the enjoyment and contemplation of the one Supreme Being, in adoration that will be as uniform, as it will be intense.

What I mean to infer from this is, that the disposition, which is principally, and indeed, I may say, wholly required in a Christian, is that of being humble, teachable, and unpretending;

* Heb. xi. 26. † Rev. xxi. 4.

[1] The following quotation is hacknied, but yet so remarkable and so applicable, that I cannot but remind the reader, what class of beings it is that our Milton represents as amusing themselves in another world with abstract speculations.

Others apart sat on a hill retir'd
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute;
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.

PAR. LOST, B. II.

And Milton was a republican and a Calvinist!

particularly disposed to submit to authority, and to obey them that are set over him. I would say, further, that in proportion as such a disposition becomes more general, the peace not only of the community but of the individual will be promoted; that where such a disposition exists, schism will rarely, if ever, be found. That on the other hand, as it will appear from the scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testament as well as from later histories, it is to the contrary disposition that we may attribute and trace up all the divisions and the dissentions by which the church has been torn, and the pure worship of God has been impeded. It was the desire of distinguishing themselves, or the impatience of control, which first led men to set up as leaders of new sects and made them familiar with heresies. It is this spirit of pride and ambition, this desire of rule which has since seduced the minds of Christians to cast aside their natural character, and to break that peace, which is the very essence of their profession. This is so clearly to be made out in almost every instance, that I trust I shall appear to be justified in laying down the proposition thus broadly. There may be cases, perhaps many, which elude the search of man, and where it may be impossible positively to ascertain the intention with which any act has beeen committed; but in much the greater

number the motives will but too plainly discover themselves, and leave us no doubt upon the subject.

Let then the question be tried in the first instance by the holy scriptures, and let it be permitted me to bring forward what is revealed to us upon this point, in the Old as well as the New Testament. The inquiry need not detain us long, because, as I have urged before, we shall find the evidence to be all on one side. In no one instance will there be found, an example or even word to justify that unbounded liberty of private judgment, which claims the right of departing at pleasure from received institutions, and going after a way of its own. If we shall find a period, as a remarkable one there was, when every man did "what was "right in his own eyes," it will be such a one as will afford no warrant for imagining that it is a state of that kind, which God particularly delights to see. It will indeed rather afford us very strong arguments for coming to a directly opposite conclusion.

Going on in the natural order, I shall begin with what is found in the Old Testament upon the subject. But there have been, and probably are, men who would object to my reasoning from what was commanded, or performed under the Mosaic dispensation[a]. I shall be told per-

[a] See additional note D.

haps, that Christ has "blotted out the hand-"writing of ordinances*;" that "old things "are passed away†," that we are admonished to "stand fast in the liberty with which he "has made us free‡." To such objections I may answer in the first place, that we are expressly warned "not to use that liberty for "a cloak of maliciousness§: for an occasion "to the flesh‖:" for "a stumbling block to "weak brethren¶." We are told too of persons (and those of the very description now under consideration) who "despise govern-"ments," who in alluring others to evil, "promise them liberty, while they themselves "are the servants of corruption**." We are therefore surely called upon to be particularly careful that we do not misapprehend the nature of that liberty which belongs to a Christian. Undoubtedly that liberty has been grossly abused in the very way against which I am protesting. It must therefore be highly proper to have clear and distinct ideas of what that was from which Christ has set us free, lest we fall into that sin which was so expressly condemned by more than one apostle.

Christ then most certainly took away, in the first place, the sacrifices under the old law;

* Col. ii. 14. † 2 Cor. v. 17. ‡ Gal. v. 1.
§ 1 Pet. ii. 16. ‖ Gal. v. 13. ¶ 1 Cor. viii. 9.
** 2 Peter ii. 19.

those sacrifices which were instituted from the beginning, in all probability from the very period of the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise; and so instituted as preparatory to, and indicative of the one great sacrifice for sin. Having himself in his own person, once for all, made the requisite and sufficient atonement, there "remained thenceforth no more "sacrifice for sin*;" and from the obligation of this, not only the Jews, but all mankind were set at liberty. He further took away every institution which was ordained exclusively for the children of Israel, which had an evident reference to their peculiar situation: whatever was local or personal to them. But every law and every principle which was of general application, which could be observed by the great body of mankind; which was fitted to all nations, and all seasons, he not only did not take away, but expressly sanctioned and made more binding. In all the precepts which he delivered, he referred to them in such a manner as to make it clear that he was ordaining no new thing. Not only the two great commandments of the law were laid down by him in the very words of Moses, but he expressly disclaimed the idea that he was come to "de-"stroy the law and the prophets;" he declared that he came "not to destroy, but to

* Heb. x. 26.

"fulfil*." What he took away of that law, was the extreme rigour of it, according to which it was pronounced, and so pronounced for a particular purpose, that "cursed is every "one that continueth not in *all* the things "which are written in the book of the law to "do them†." Under the new covenant, assurances were held out of grace and favour upon that imperfect performance, of which alone we are capable, provided it was accompanied with faith in Christ, and a reliance for salvation upon his merits to the exclusion of every other claim[a]. But still obedience was and is required as strictly, and in as great degree, from us as it was from the Jews: nay, it is required in substance to the same laws, and to the same religious as well as moral system. It is the same God under the new, as under the old

* Mat. v. 17. † Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxvii. 26.

[a] The covenant of works was first established with Adam and Eve in Paradise; and perhaps we may say that it was against them only that it could strictly be, or rather was meant to be, enforced; since it was with them only of all human creatures that the power of strictly observing it appears to have been lodged. When it was again promulgated to the Israelites under Moses, it was attended with modifications, and even promises of forgiveness, to repentant sinners. So that if it was made strict in terms, it was, as I conceive, for the reason plainly intimated by St. Paul; that, being convinced by experience of our inability to work out our salvation, merely by our own efforts, we should be the more ready to lay hold of the second covenant. Thus "the law was our "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Gal. iii. 24.

dispensation: we cannot therefore suppose that the mode of serving him should be essentially different in the one case from what it was in the other. Indeed the great code, which is acknowledged by us, as by all Christian nations, is that which was delivered to Moses by God himself on Mount Sinai. Those therefore who would object to any argument drawn from the commandments, or the dispensations of God under the law, should be prepared to shew that the commandments and the dispensations upon which the argument is built, had all that peculiarity which made them applicable to the Jews only and no one else: no, not by possibility to any one else: for it is certain that it is only such commandments that are abrogated, such dispensations only that we can be sure will not recur. Nay, even as to those particulars which are so circumstanced, we may very fairly argue from them to a certain extent: since we can never suppose that God would at any time have enjoined or brought to pass that which was essentially bad, or inexpedient in itself.

But indeed he who reads and considers the books of the Old Testament only, with a view to what is positively commanded in them, will, as I conceive, have but a very imperfect idea of their importance, or of the usefulness which may be derived from them. It is, in fact, the only

history in which we are enabled distinctly to trace the workings of God's providence, to see his hand visibly extended, his eye actually superintending all, even the minutest actions of individuals as well as of nations. We have here the clearest evidence of what in other cases we can only conjecture, the manner in which he interposes to control and over-rule the things of this world. And from what then took place, we are not only taught to reason upon what has passed in later days, but may draw wholesome, and instructive lessons for our guidance. And this, St. Paul tells us, is one great end for which we should consult and mark those sacred oracles. Speaking of some of those instances (one indeed which particularly applies to the subject of these discourses) in which the disobedience and rebellious disposition of the Israelites were severely punished, he adds, "Now all these things happened to "them for ensamples, and they are written for "our admonition, upon whom the ends of the "world are come*."

After this, I trust, it will not be objected to me that I argue either unfairly or impertinently, when I assume that what God considered as an abomination and as highly punishable under the old covenant, could not be very acceptable to him under the new.

* 1 Cor. x. 11.

Let me be permitted to make another observation. Independently of the great ends, which the Almighty had in view when he imposed upon the Israelites ordinances so numerous and burthensome, it cannot be denied that the very number and particularity of them had a direct tendency to produce that unity which is so desirable, and so strongly recommended to us. This indeed must be the case with all laws. Every statute, as it exacts obedience from every member of the community to one and the same system, as it regulates their conduct according to one and the same rule of action, must so far operate to knit them together, and to give them the same habits, the same manners, and the same way of thinking. It is clear also that the more laws are multiplied, and the more strictly they are observed, the more numerous the points of union will be, and the more the individuals will be likely to assimilate to each other. This was, in fact, what took place among the Jews; who thus preserved, and even in their present state of dispersion, exhibit a closer connexion with each other, and have a more strongly-marked character, not only than any other people now existing, but than any people that ever was known. And this may well make us consider whether that which some men are so averse to, the observation of ordinances, may not in some sort

contribute to the increase of charity, as it most assuredly does to creating in us habits of obedience.

Let us now examine how far the condition of mankind in the early ages, as it is disclosed to us in scripture, accords or not with these ideas.

We may, I think, see good grounds to divide the inhabitants of the earth, in what we may call the former days, into two distinct classes; one which does not seem to have been subjected to any particular form of government, or, at least, not to any strict rule in religious matters: the other, on the contrary, kept under a discipline as strict as it was uniform, under regulations which no one was allowed to transgress without the severest punishment. Now, what shall we find to have followed from these two different orders of things? To which of them was annexed either greater purity of mind, and innocence of conversation, or a greater share of God's blessing, and even temporal happiness? We must, I think, perforce answer this in favour of that description of persons who were governed by the most positive and severe laws.

If we consider the state of mankind before the deluge, when, as far as appears to us, the greatest liberty of action was permitted, when all men seem to have been left to worship God

according to their own private judgment; although we shall find some individuals, one or two in particular, highly distinguished for piety and the practice of righteousness, yet we cannot surely think very favourably of that order of things which led to such a general corruption, that in the end only one man was found worthy in the sight of God to be saved from the general destruction in which all the rest of mankind were involved. If we extend our view further to the period which immediately succeeded the deluge, when the same liberty appears to have been continued to Noah and his sons, what do we see but the same disposition to forget God, and to transgress his laws, even in those who had been actual eye-witnesses of his judgments? And we perceive this perverseness of disposition breaking out not only in the posterity of Ham, but even in the immediate or almost immediate descendants of the other brothers, whom we find early engaged in a project of making themselves independent of their Divine Creator and Judge; a project which was only defeated by that confusion of tongues and subsequent dispersion which produced the variety of nations by which the earth is now peopled. What was the sort of religious worship which all these nations adopted, into what gross idolatry they fell, even from that very time as far back as we can trace them, I need

not detail to you. So prevalent and so popular was the worship of false gods, so absolutely were the inhabitants of the earth besotted with, and given up to, the most abominable superstition, that the knowledge of the true God was only preserved by instituting that other order of persons, by selecting a particular people to be put under the most strict ordinances and subjected to the most severe discipline.

But, still more clearly to shew the profitableness if not the necessity of a uniform rule or standard, in order to preserve men from error, it has so happened, that, in the history of this very people there was a particular period, when, as I hinted before, a relaxation took place in this respect: when, as we are told, "There was "no king in Israel, but every man did that "which was right in his eyes*." Now, what was the consequence of this? Why, that wickedness and impiety of all sorts, nay, and idolatry in various forms, generally and abominably prevailed among them; that they were constantly torn with dissentions and divisions, and one tribe was nearly extirpated. During the greatest part of this period they were, in consequence of this their rebellion and misconduct, given over and subjected to other nations who tyrannized over them. When too, under the

* Judges xvii. 6. and xxi. 25.

pressure of their calamity, they turned to God, and he heard their cry and helped them; when "he sent judges which delivered them out of the "hands of them that spoiled them*;" even then the remembrance of these mercies had not any lasting effect upon their minds; for we are expressly told in their history, that it came to pass, that "when the judge was dead," (that is, the judge who had been the instrument of any particular deliverance) "they returned and cor- "rupted themselves more than their fathers, in "following other gods, and bowing down "unto them†."

From the consideration of these examples it does seem to me, that we may fairly conclude, upon a general view of things, that it is at least dangerous for men to be indulged with that complete liberty for which some persons would stipulate; that it is neither safe nor scriptural to declare against all sort of restraint, in the choice of particular modes of worship, and in the performance of religious offices.

Let us now see what was God's manner of dealing with the people whom he placed under his own peculiar superintendence, and to whom he prescribed with the greatest minuteness the forms in which he would be approached, and the honours which should be paid to him. Did

* Judges ii. 16. † Ib. 19.

he lightly suffer the order which he had established to be infringed? Did he not on the contrary most severely punish those who deviated from it? And this whether individuals or bodies of men? It is most undoubted and notorious that he did. But as in many of those instances the falling off from God's word was attended with the wickedness of open rebellion and idolatry, as it was what we may call heretical, I shall confine myself to two of those instances where the offence committed was, at least in the beginning, purely what we may call schismatical, where all that was intended was to set up other ministers and other teachers, in opposition to those who were so constituted by divine appointment.

The first of these is the well-known case of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, which is so directly in point that it is not possible wholly to pass it over. But it is also so well understood that I need not enlarge upon it. I shall only observe two things: First, that the origin of this schism was clearly the ambition of Corah and his fellows. They wished to partake of the power and pre-eminence with which God had invested Moses and Aaron. Secondly, I would have you note the language which was held by these men, and consider whether it be any thing more than what has been commonly urged in latter times against the rulers of our church. "Ye take

" too much upon you," said they, speaking to Moses and Aaron, "seeing all the congrega-" tion are holy, every one of them, and the " Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye " up yourselves above the congregation of the " Lord*?" What was insisted upon here, was, you see, to outward appearance, only the assertion of an equality among all the members of the community. It was but that denial of a superiority of one man over the rest, which the Presbyterians to a certain degree, and the Independents in every respect refused to admit. The remarkable punishment which was inflicted upon these "sinners against their own souls†," as they are called, was of a nature to repress all such attempts in future. It was indeed more solemn and striking than any judgment which was afterwards executed even upon idolaters. Perhaps it is not easy to conceive any sight more awful and tremendous, than that "new thing," that "the earth should open her mouth " and swallow up" such numbers of persons, and "all that appertained to them, and that " they should go down alive into the pit[a]."

Of this attempt to intrude into the priesthood as made by individuals, we therefore find no

* Numb. xvi. 3. † Ib. 38.

[a] Numb. xvi. 30. &c. and observe what Austin says upon this in a passage before cited. Note [a] Sermon I.

repetition. The other instance of schism, which I purpose to notice, was of a more general nature, but so far resembled this, as it was also dictated by ambition, and originated in motives of worldly policy. You have probably already anticipated me in referring to that separation of the ten tribes which of the sons of Israel made two distinct people, as well in their religious as their civil economy. That those tribes should no longer serve Rehoboam as their king, was, you know, of divine appointment; but not so the change in their mode of worship. They still continued bound to go up to Jerusalem with their offerings, and to appear before God in his temple, as he had commanded. From this they had no dispensation; and there is no doubt that he who stopped Rehoboam, when he was arming against his revolted subjects, by saying to him, "This thing is from me*," would in like manner have extended his protection to them in this respect also, and ensured them the full exercise of their religious duties. But the mind of Jeroboam was occupied by other considerations. His whole and sole anxiety was, how he should most securely retain the kingdom which was thus cast upon him. He "said in his heart, If this people go up to "do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jeru-

* 1 Kings xii. 24.

"salem, then shall the heart of this people turn "again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam, "king of Judah, and they shall kill me and go "again to Rehoboam, king of Judah[5]." He therefore took counsel, and being the counsel of human wisdom, it is no wonder that it drew both him and his people farther into error. "He "took counsel," it is said, "and made two "calves, and said to his subjects, It is too "much for you to go up to Jerusalem, behold "thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up "out of the land of Egypt*." Here we see the natural progress of schism; how almost of course it leads to that which is false doctrine: in other words how readily it becomes heretical; how in this particular case it degenerated into idolatry[6]. And it is observable (an observation

[5] 1 Kings xii. 27. I shall, I hope, be allowed to observe without offence, that the first establishment of Presbyterianism, originated in motives not very dissimilar. Calvin found that episcopacy was unfavourable to republican forms of government. He devised therefore a system of greater parity to suit his political ideas. In the great rebellion it is evident that the adoption of a similar system was made instrumental to the overthrow of monarchy, and it is equally notorious that the preference which Cromwell afterwards gave to the Independents, had for its motive the strengthening of himself in his usurpation.

* 1 Kings xii. 28.

[6] Perhaps nothing can be imagined more gross than the adoption of this idolatrous mode of worshipping God; for it thus became in all its circumstances the very offence committed by the ancestors of these men before Mount Sinai, and for which they were so

which it may be proper to recollect hereafter) that in this case the offence was not against the first, but against the second commandment; for there is every reason to conclude that the meaning of Jeroboam was that they should worship Jehovah himself under the likeness of these calves. He knew his people, and that they must have something sensible to attract their notice; so that he only debased, by the symbols which he adopted, he did not take away, or at least did not mean to take away, the worship of the true God. This however did not the less become a sin, and a deep one; for "the people "went up to worship before the one, even unto "Dan*." And indeed the sin did not stop here, for we learn in the next verse, that, in that natural course by which men proceed in evil, "He "made an house of high places†," which was another and a distinct innovation upon the established worship. Lastly, follows another circumstance which seems to go along, and to have gone along with every schism from that time to this: "He made priests of the lowest of the "people, which were not of the sons of Levi‡."

The consequence of this was that God cursed this people with such a succession of wicked

severely reproved. Of these men at least we may say, without fear of being contradicted, that they knew that they were acting wrong that they wilfully erred in forsaking the established worship.

* 1 Kings xii. 30. † Ib. 31. ‡ Ib.

kings, as I believe never has been seen in any other age or nation; that the people thus governed, went on deeper and deeper in wickedness; till, at last, the measure of their crimes being full, they were carried away into captivity, from whence they have never returned, nor is any trace or remembrance left of what became of them, or any certain knowledge whether they do or do not any where exist as a body. So signal and so severe was the vengeance which God took upon them for this their wilful and perverse separation from that religious communion which he had instituted for them; so signal, I say, was their punishment, that I know not if a parallel be to be found for it in all history[7].

[7] True it is that even this state of corruption, and this establishment of idolatry, by authority of the sovereign, did not hinder, but that individuals, though few in number and hardly to be discerned should retain their allegiance to the true God, and serve him with sincerity and uprightness. Nay, he had among them prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha, who were particularly distinguished by the wonders which they wrought, as well as the doctrine which they inculcated. It was to Elijah that the Almighty himself declared this: "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel all the "knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which "hath not kissed him," 1 Kings xix. 18. and see Rom. xi. 4. To such men undoubtedly it was not imputed as a crime that they did not go up at the stated times to Jerusalem, but this can only form a precedent for those who are under the same constraint, and who are hindered by an overbearing power, from joining in worship with that which is the true and proper church.

Upon this view of things, as far as it has gone, and as far as we trust to the scriptures of the Old Testament, I apprehend that sufficient ground has been laid for concluding, according to what I have said before, first, that a total freedom from church government and external ceremonies is not a state particularly favourable to the increase of religion, but rather the contrary: secondly, that where such government, and such ordinances have been established, any attempt to shake them off, whether directed against the persons of the individuals who were at the head of the establishment, or against the authority which they exercised, and the mode of worship itself, has not only not been approved of by God, but has drawn down upon those who presumed so to act, his heavy indignation. And not only this, but we have here an example where God actually himself instituted and established not only a very minute and extensive code of such rites and ordinances, but set apart a particular description of persons to minister in them before him. This too, among that favoured people whom he had chosen out of all the nations, as the people with whom he would dwell, and with whom only the knowledge of him should be preserved. It appears, I say, that from this people, among whom he raised up a succession of holy men and prophets, he required not merely the abstracted

worship of the spirit, but also a rigid adherence to visible forms and ceremonies. He required it from the body at large; he required it also from every individual. This must, therefore, I conceive, form a strong presumption in favour of adopting a certain degree of ceremony in the institution of any religion. At least it should seem hardly excusable, certainly not justifiable, for any person to separate from the communion of his fellows, united in the same faith, merely because they use ceremonies; as long, at least, as those ceremonies continue to be such as cannot be shewn to be either unlawful in themselves, or leading directly to evil consequences. Yet, you well know, that this was the reason which in later times, was assigned by the great body of the dissenters in this country for their separation from our church. When pressed hard for the grounds of that separation, when it was urged that the use of the surplice, as well as the sign of the cross in baptism, were adopted simply for the sake of decency and of edification, they persisted in objecting to them, even to the perpetuating of the schism, purely and nakedly upon the ground that there was no express warrant of Christ and his apostles for the use of those particular forms, that they were therefore impositions of men, and that to such impositions they would not submit.

Now, without recurring to that argument

which I have hinted before, that there is no mode of worshipping God, which prevails in any congregation, though ever so bare of forms, that has not something of human institution in it, that according to this reasoning, even the appointment of any particular day or hour for divine worship, may be called a human imposition; that such a proposition if consistently pursued, and insisted upon rigorously, would lead to all the extravagances of mysticism; that, in fact, it has led among the Quakers to the taking away of the sacraments, and the resisting of the civil authority, in more than one important point[a]; let us see whether in fact there be any reason to pronounce that the kingdom of Christ was to be essentially different even in these particulars, from the kingdom which had before resided with Judah; whether either our Lord or his apostles shewed a repugnance to complying with forms, merely as forms; nay, to go farther, whether they held it a sufficient reason for separating from any

[a] This is in fact the case with the Quakers in many important particulars; nor does their disclaiming all war or resistance to what they call oppression, carry with it any thing like a due and necessary submission to "the powers that be." By refusing to pay tythes, to take upon themselves particular offices, to be sworn as witnesses, and various other instances, where they hold a conduct in direct opposition to the laws of their country, they in fact carry on a system of resistance, which, if it were general, would be most effectual to the overthrow of the government.

communion, that its rulers, though preserving the true doctrine, were, in their own particular practice, themselves become corrupt.

In the first place, we find our saviour, though as he said of himself, he was "Lord of the Sabbath*," as of all things, whether of divine or of human institution, submitting to every rite of the Jewish church, circumcised, presented in the temple, going up to Jerusalem with his parents at the stated season; and, before he entered upon his ministry, solemnly baptized; this too, for that very memorable reason which he gave to John at the time of his baptism, that thus "it became him to fulfil all righteousness†," thus expressly attaching righteousness to the performance of outward ceremonies. After that even while he is reprobating the hypocrisy and wickedness of the elders among the Jews, so far is he from taking occasion to disparage their authority, that he expressly guards against any such conclusion. "The scribes and the pharisees," he said to the people, "sit in Moses' seat; all "therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, "that observe and do; but do not after their "works, for they say and do not‡." Even after he had ascended up into Heaven, and when the apostles were actually carrying into

* Luke vi. 5. Mark ii. 28. † Matth. iii. 15.
‡ Matth. xxiii. 3.

execution the important and gracious purpose for which he came, of breaking down the partition wall, and extending the knowledge of God to the gentiles also; we do not find either in the apostles themselves, or in the Jewish converts, any aversion to joining in communion with the body of the Jews, or to complying with the ceremonies of the law. They took care indeed to guard against the imposition of the yoke upon the gentile converts; but, as far as appears from history, as long as Jerusalem existed, and there was a temple where Jehovah was worshipped, such Christians as chose might and did pay their vows at his sanctuary. And to the hierarchy of that church they not only paid respect in their persons, but in their writings reasoned upon it and alleged it as supporting their own authority, and as being connected with our religion. Christ is therefore called the "Passover*." He is also not only the victim, but the High Priest. It is said of those who were invested with that character, that "no man taketh that honour to himself but "he that is called of God, as was Aaron†." Again it is asked, as an argument why the ministers of Christ should have a provision supplied to them by those whom they taught, "Know ye not that they which minister about

* 1 Cor. v. 7. † Heb. v. 4.

"holy things, live of the things of the tem-
"ple*?" Thus were the ordinances under the old law made the foundation for the rule and discipline which should be established in the church. And in no one instance do we find them disparaged or undervalued, except when they were erroneously exalted beyond their proper value, and set in competition with, or supposed to contribute at all to the efficacy of the atonement made by our Lord.

But, further, what did actually take place in the church when established by the apostles? Was it governed by any rule? What was the liberty which prevailed in it? Not only the apostles and first teachers governed the church, but they also ordained others who should take that charge upon them. This was done in the very mode now practised. And even Barnabas and Saul when sent out to a particular ministry, received their authority by the laying on of hands. After that, we find them superintending each their proper provinces, according to the direction which their labours had taken, and the different countries which they had converted. Lastly, not only elders were ordained in every church, but in the persons of Timothy and of Titus we may trace the very character which is now sustained by our metropolitans.

* 1 Cor. ix. 13.

These men succeeded to the name as well as to the office of apostles. In process of time the name was changed into that of angel, and after a short interval, the title of bishop or superintendant was appropriated to that class of officers. To all these the people are enjoined to be obedient. "Submit yourselves to every one that "helpeth with us and laboureth*." "Obey "them that have the rule over you, and sub- "mit yourselves†." Such are the injunctions of the apostles to the disciples at large; and that the apostles themselves exercised the most extensive and absolute authority, much beyond what was claimed by the high priest among the Jews*, no man who reads the epistles of St. Paul, can have a doubt. As little doubt is there of their having delegated to their successors the

* 1 Cor. xvi. 16. † Heb. xiii. 17.

* They were like their great master, whose ambassadors they were, having his full powers, and being prophets as well as priests. But it may be remarked that this union of character and accumulation of authority was to cease with them. In the epistles to Titus and Timothy we have no intimation that the supernatural gifts which the apostles possessed, would be continued to them or that they were actually imparted to either of those holy men. On the contrary they are exhorted to "hold fast the form of sound words "delivered to them," to "continue in the things which they had "learned," and this with a particular reference to the scriptures. (2 Tim. iii. 14. et seq.) So that the apostle was immediately laying the foundation of an establishment, which was to be permanent both in doctrine and discipline. All the modes of punishing offenders there mentioned by him are simply excommunication, or such other modes as were to remain in the church for ever.

whole of that authority, except that supernatural part of it which they derived from the immediate communication of the Holy Ghost, and which gave them power not only to discern hearts, but to inflict extraordinary punishments, even extending to death upon presumptuous offenders[10]. Except this, I say, which was the special gift of God to them personally, there appears no doubt but that both Timothy and Titus received all the power to rule their respective churches with as absolute command as had been exercised by St. Paul himself. It is also clear from what I have already cited, and many other passages, that a duty was imposed upon the members of the church at large to provide for their ministers and teachers. The particular mode in which this was to be done was not indeed declared, because it must have varied according to the situation of the churches in their then precarious state, when, instead of being protected, they were persecuted by the civil power. But nothing can be more extensive or general than the principle of that maxim, by which, as had been done by our blessed Lord before him, the apostle enforced this right.

[10] Such as took place in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira, and Elymas. So as to the sicknesses and deaths in the Corinthian church, as well such as happened as such as were threatened by St. Paul.

"The labourer is worthy of his reward," or, "of his hire[11]."

In all this therefore we see nothing essentially different from the course which was observed in the Jewish church. I may say hardly any difference, except as far as such a difference was made necessary by the different circumstances under which the one and the other was established: the first having risen up in connexion with, and supported by the civil government of the nation; the church of Christ on the contrary, not only not having any such connexion, but being opposed and discouraged in all possible ways by the ruling powers of the states where it was preached: the first being confined to one people; the other being intended for the salvation of all nations, and to go out into all lands. This accounts for what I have mentioned before of there being no fixed provision made for the clergy in the earliest ages; because none such could be made without the concurrence of the temporal government; this accounts also for the priesthood not being confined to one family, as it was among the Jews; and why instead of being hereditary, it was assigned and delegated to such as were

[11] Luke x. 7. and 1 Tim. v. 18. It is very material to recollect that this is said to Timothy. It was therefore a matter not personal to the apostles, but to be observed in after ages.

found proper for it by those who had in charge to keep up the succession: why, also, instead of one high priest, there were, in the first place, instituted twelve apostles: not one pope, I may add, but many bishops. But still the priesthood was essentially the same, and the same may be said of the deacons, who, without any forced construction, may be considered as answering to the Levites[18].

[18] The testimony of Jerom to this effect is well known, as delivered in the very passage, in which he is arguing for something like inherent equality between presbyters and bishops. "Ut scia-"mus traditiones apostolicas sumptas de veteri Testamento, quod "Aaron et filii ejus atque Levitæ in templo fuerunt, hoc sibi episcopi "atque diaconi vindicant in Ecclesia," in Epistolâ ad Evangelum, Op. V. iv. Par. 2. p. 803. Jerom, it is well known, was the great authority for the alleged parity of presbyters and bishops. Yet in this very epistle, he admits that the bishops only can ordain. "Quid enim facit, *excepta ordinatione*, episcopus, quod Presbyter non "faciat." Hammond vol. iv. 771, reckons up fifty other testimonies from this very Jerom for the superiority of bishops over presbyters. Jerom is, indeed, every way a very strong authority for the succession of bishops, and the authority of the church. For even he carries the institution of bishops to the very apostolical age. He says, when men began to say, "I am of Paul, and I of Cephas," &c. referring to the very words of the apostle, then, says he, the authority was given to one, (that is the bishop,) that the seeds of schism might be removed, "ut schismatum semina tollerentur." Vol. iv. 1. Pars. p, 412. Ed. Bened. This he repeats several times in different places. Which, therefore. to the Presbyterians themselves, should have been an effectual argument, thus coming from their great oracle, against their separation. See also other authorities in Hammond, Leslie (vol. ii. p. 220.) and Potter, Hoadly, and later writers.

What now did the apostles think of those persons who broke this order, who, following opinions of their own, occasioned divisions in the several churches? We have already seen what an unqualified condemnation St. Paul passed upon those who troubled the Galatians. Was he at all less decisive in respect of those who disturbed the peace of other congregations? "Now," says he, in the conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans, when he was delivering them such commands as he particularly wished should leave a lasting impression upon them, "Now, I be-"seech you, brethren, mark them which cause "division and offences contrary to the doctrine "which ye have learned, and avoid them*." In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, he beseeches the brethren to "warn them that are "unruly," or disorderly, as it is in the margin of our Bibles, "τους ἀτάκτους†." In the second Epistle, he repeats and enforces the same precept, in a way that shews plainly what he means by the word "ἀτάκτοι." "Now," says he, "we "command you, brethren, that ye withdraw "yourselves from every brother that walketh dis-"orderly, ἀτάκτως, and not according to the tra-"ditions which ye received of us‡." Among other very strong exhortations to Timothy and to Titus, the former is directed to "withdraw

* Rom. xvi. 17. † 1 Thes. v. 14. ‡ 2 Thes. iii. 16.

"himself*" from persons of that description; and the latter is expressly enjoined to "reject," that is evidently to excommunicate "an heretic†, "after the first and second admonition." Even the meek and amiable John, the beloved disciple of our Lord is not less strong in his language. "If" says he to the elect lady, "there come any "unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive "him not into your house, neither bid him God "speed‡."

But it is in the first Epistle to the Corinthians that we have, perhaps, the most exact picture, that is to be found any where, of pure schism; and I must add, of such schism as is but too frequent among us. "I hear," says the apostle, "that there are contentions among you." Now, what were they? Why that "every one said, I "am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Ce-"phas, and I of Christ[13]." This, according to

* 1 Tim. vi. 5. † Tit. iii. 10. ‡ 2 John 10.

[13] 1 Cor. i. 12. Is not this "I of Christ," very like to the title arrogated by those well known characters of our days already noticed, who, in contradistinction to their brethren, call themselves Evangelical or Gospel Ministers? As St. Paul said of Christ, may we not say here, "Is the gospel divided?" May we not go on too to say, "was Calvin crucified for you, or were you baptized in the "name of Wesley?" It may be said, and I think, has been urged, that the first reformers, men whom we revere, and to whom it was never objected, also described themselves as Gospel Ministers, or Gospel Preachers. This may be true, but the cases were very different. They did it to distinguish themselves from those who professed to preach something *besides* the gospel: from the Papists,

modern ideas, was a difference of opinion which did not deserve notice; nay, we know that some men account it a mark of zeal to go hunting after such preachers as they imagine deliver themselves in a more edifying or more impressive manner. But what was St. Paul's judgment upon this matter? Why, he tells them that they are carnal. "Ye are carnal," he says, "for, "whereas, there is among you envying and "strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and "walk as men? For, while one says I am of "Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye "not carnal*?" Strong as these words of disapprobation are, yet do they fall very short of the censures which are passed in other places upon those who cause schisms in the church. In the Epistle to the Romans, the persons marked out in the passage before referred to, are described to be such as "serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, "but their own belly, and by good works and fair "speeches deceive the simple†." In the Epistle to the Philippians, they are called, "dogs, evil "workers," "of the concision‡," alluding to their doctrines respecting circumcision. After

who rested on *traditions*, and by their traditions had even made void the word of God. But who, in the church of England, nay, among Protestants at large, admits of any other rule but the gospel? I doubt much, however, if the name was at any time, even in that sense, assumed by many of the clergy of our church.

* 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4. † Rom. xvi. 18. ‡ Philip. iii. 2.

that, he calls them, "enemies of the cross of "Christ." Again, in the Epistle to Timothy, such men are spoken of, as "having swerved "from the faith, and turned aside unto vain "jangling: desiring to be teachers of the law, "understanding neither what they say, nor what "they affirm*." Again he says, "If any man "teach otherwise," (that is otherwise than what is there set forth,) "and consent not to "wholesome words, even to the words of our "Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine, which "is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing "nothing, but doting about strifes of words, "whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil sur-"misings;---supposing that gain is godliness†." St. Peter uses equally strong language in his second Epistle; which is also the case with St. Jude. And, lastly, St. James says expressly, that "the wars and fightings among them," (which are but other words for divisions and dissentions,) "come hence even of the lusts that "war in their members‡."

To these strong and pointed authorities respecting the sin and odiousness of schism, respecting the causes and the disposition of mind, in which it originates, where shall we find the slightest contradiction? What single passage can be adduced, which in any way favours a

* 1 Tim. i. 6 7. † Ib. vi. 3, 4, 5. ‡ James iv. 1.

causeless or light separation from the church, or encourages men to follow a way of their own? Should not so many printed declarations make us cautious, not only how we fall into this sin ourselves, but how, even by our acquiescence, we give any encouragement to those that "trouble us?" "He that biddeth him God "speed," says St. John, "is partaker of his evil "works." Surely these are topics upon which it behoves *us*, at least, who labour in the ministry to "exhort, rebuke, and reprove." What can we suppose, but that the human mind, being the same in these days, as in the days of the apostles, the same abuses will exist? And, to those, who allege the obscurity of the Scriptures as a ground for dissenting, and who found upon that plea, a claim to be indulged in their own interpretation, it may be something of an answer, that there was a time, when no such obscurity could have been alleged, when resort might have been had to the very fountain head of truth, when yet heresies and divisions were little less frequent than among us. It is clear, from this very circumstance, that there is such a thing as wilful heresy, as causeless schism; both or either of which, as they exist separately or conjointly, are grievous and most dangerous sins.

But it may be said, that the apostles, indeed, might well speak in strong language of heretics

and schismatics, for *they* could discern, without danger of erring, the false from the true, the sincere dissenter from him who was actuated only by ambition or covetousness. But, in the first place, let any man shew me any one such person allowed by the apostles to be sincere or justifiable in his dissent; even then, I would say, that we need not suppose them to be altogether made up of falsehood. St. Paul says of these men, that they were "deceiving and deceived*," cheating themselves as well as cheating others. But, farther, you will observe, that I have omitted to notice the passages which relate to those who opposed the apostle personally, Hymenæus, Philœtus, or Diotrephes; as to whom, therefore, he might judge from that discernment of the heart, which God had given him. But I have confined myself to what are general directions to the churches, such as were to be followed by them in his absence, or after his death. This is also the case with the epistles written to Titus and Timothy. They all of them respectively contain injunctions to mark or reject those who walked not after the traditions received from the apostles; to avoid those who caused divisions: but what might be the meaning of the traditions, what should be such a division as was criminal, it is clear that the churches were left

* 2 Tim. iii. 13.

to judge. When Titus was bid, after the first or second admonition, to reject a heretic, most clearly it was left to his judgment to say what was heresy. And we have no reason, not the slightest, to believe that either Timothy or Titus, or the churches of Rome, had the gift of infallibility conferred on them, or could read the hearts of men; if, indeed, the apostles themselves, in their general ministry, and at all times possessed that power. Those, therefore, to whom the exhortations which I have cited were addressed, had not, as far as we can see, any other means of judging what were schisms or heresies, than the churches in these days are possessed of. They were to judge according to the traditions, or words of the evangelists and apostles, as they were preserved with them; and it may be said, that we, every one of us, in these days, have a more complete collection of those traditions, than any one church of that day could have possessed. There is, therefore, nothing which should prevent any church in these times from reprobating and condemning heresies and schisms; nay, I apprehend, that every one of the passages which I have cited, does, on the contrary, make it the duty of every Christian community so to do. The example of the apostles must, at least, I conceive, operate so far as to be our justification, if, upon such

occasions, we speak as we feel, if we use the language of boldness, and of simplicity.

I will only add, for the present, that many are the passages which I might further have adduced. I have not alleged the numerous exhortations to unity which abound in the scriptures; nor even that most significant term of edification; a metaphor taken from building, and which implies the strongest and most perfect coherence of all the parts. Enough, however, I trust, has been said to make it evident, that it is not by giving way to every wild opinion that we shall best please God[14]; but by

14. "I cannot think that this method of preventing our dangers" (those arising from schism,) "is to make such concessions to *dissenters*, as will shake and destroy the present constitution, but by "reasoning them into union upon such principles as are common "to all the churches of the *Reformation*. For such principles are, "doubtless, the most proper and the *most secure* method of uniting "and preserving us against the common enemy," (he means popery,) "and consequently not only the most reasonable, but the "most seasonable method also." Bingham's Pref. to French Church's Apology for the Church of England. Such was the opinion of a most eminent divine, distinguished, not only for his great learning, and knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquities, but for his judgment, sincerity, and candour. It is but fair to subjoin the remark made upon this passage by the well known Dr. Towers, one of the editors of the last edition of the Biographia Britannica, and a (I believe, Socinian) dissenter. "All attempts to reason "men into an *exact uniformity of sentiment*, have been found ineffica-"cious, and ever will be so. Whenever men dare think for "themselves, they will think differently; but though uniformity of "sentiment be impracticable, persons of very opposite opinions may "unite in mutual candour, forbearance, and benevolence." Biog.

steadily maintaining what was characterised at the beginning as the "apostles' doctrine and "fellowship." And you will, I flatter myself, readily join with me, while I conclude in the strong and appropriate words of St. Paul, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name "of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the "same thing, and that there be no divisions "among you, but that ye be perfectly joined "together in the same mind, and in the same "judgment†."

Brit. Art. Bingham. Upon this, I may observe, first, that *exact uniformity* of *sentiment* is what no man was ever so visionary as to expect. Something much short of that will be sufficient to bring about the unity which is so much insisted upon in the scriptures; and, secondly, it is often useful, nay, enjoined as a duty to aim at that which is in strictness unattainable, as we are all required to be perfect, though no man can hope to attain perfection. It is only by thus endeavouring to bring about the most widely extended, and positively greatest good, that we are enabled to produce the greatest good in our power. Unquestionably, also, in seeking after union, we cannot employ too much candour, forbearance and benevolence, provided, always, that we do not so far mistake the meaning of these terms as to be drawn in to betray the cause in which we are engaged. It is, in fact, as we have seen, to the want of candour, forbearance, and benevolence, that schisms are supposed to have originated.

† 1 Cor. i. 10.

SERMON III.

MATT. vii. 16.

Ye shall know them by their Fruits.

THIS saying of our blessed Saviour was professedly uttered with a view of pointing out to the disciples an easy and certain test by which they might discover the sort of teachers whom they were to follow, as well as those whom they were to avoid. The right understanding of the words becomes therefore a point of some importance to the subject upon which I am discoursing; and the consideration of them will be of great use in illustrating and enforcing that part of it upon which I am now about to enter; and which has for its object to shew the obvious tendency of schism, and the causes in which

it originates; as well as the effects which it has actually produced in the different instances in which it has acquired any strength or permanency.

"Beware," says our Lord, "of false pro-
"phets which come to you in sheep's clothing,
"but inwardly they are ravening wolves."
"Ye shall know them by their fruits." And he explains this, as it was his manner, by familiar images. "Do men gather grapes of thorns,
"or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree
"bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree
"bringeth forth evil fruit." Further, he adds,
"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,
"neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good
"fruit." About the precise meaning of these expressions, there has been a certain diversity of opinions among commentators. Some by the "coming in sheep's clothing" merely understand the character of the persons in question, their being invested with, or taking upon them the office of teachers. And this they found upon that circumstance of the sheep-skin being the dress in which the prophets of old had been usually clothed. It is manifest, however, in the first place, that this would be mere tautology, since it would add nothing to the description before given of the persons spoken of, that they were prophets. "Beware of false
"prophets." But secondly, what is perhaps

more material, this is neither so agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind, nor does it properly contrast with the expression that follows, that "inwardly they are ravening "wolves." This latter clearly applies to the inward disposition and the real pursuits and occupations of the animal: the former, therefore, should relate to the outward demeanour and appearance of the man; that exterior of sanctity and charity which we are so often reminded that the hypocrites of that day were wont to assume. They were, however, to be detected and discerned from the true prophets "by "their fruits."

But as to this also there has been a variety of sentiments. Some will have it that the word "fruits" means good works; the piety and charity which the preacher is to shew forth in his life and conversation. But this also, I apprehend to be neither agreeable to the context nor to other parts of scripture. For our Saviour has no where told us that we are not to listen to those who are appointed to preach the word, if they are not also exemplary in their conduct. So far from it, he did in one remarkable instance, already referred to, tell the multitude the direct contrary; as when he bade them, "observe and do all that the pharisees and "scribes bade them observe," at the same time that he cautioned them "not to do after their

" works; for" as he goes on, " they say and do " not;" which is a sufficient proof that it is no reason for not receiving good doctrine, no, nor ought to be any prejudice against it, that it is propounded by an immoral man, provided he be duly commissioned to deliver it; provided he " sit in Moses's seat." According to my idea of this, the word "fruits" will properly mean the *effect* and *tendency* of the doctrine; whether it be calculated to answer the ends proposed of making men better, of bringing them to the knowledge of God, and shewing them the way of salvation: whether, in other words, it be that true spiritual food with which the gospel was intended to nourish and to strengthen our souls. This it is which we ought to look to, and not to the individual and personal qualifications of the speaker.

If it be objected to me that, in putting this meaning upon the word, I shall be found to contradict the reasoning of our Lord, for that then "a corrupt tree" may "bring forth good " fruit," I shall answer, in the first place, that the precepts of our Saviour, and still more his parables and illustrations, are in their nature general, and must not be tied strictly to every case, nor to an application in every particular: that it will, however, almost always happen that a man who preaches the really true and edifying doctrine will be a good man, or

at least not a bad man; his preaching cannot be without effect upon himself, or he must have "a conscience seared in-" deed with a hot iron*." But, further, if it should so happen that so strong and lamentable a contradiction should take place, yet this again will not make against my interpretation; for the tree will still be a good tree *quoad hoc;* that is, as to the purpose for which it is there placed. It may be with respect to itself only, as corrupt as it may, nay, eaten up with the canker, if you will, but if it afford the nourishment required, if the fruit be good, the tree is not bad. And indeed this is what we actually see take place in trees which continue to bear excellent fruit, when they are apparently in the last state of decay. Whereas, on the other hand, there are trees whose flourishing and healthy condition only makes the fruit which they bear more bitter and unwholesome.

Take also the other figure which our Lord has made use of; is it not clear that the wolves of which he speaks are to be avoided, not so much as being bad in themselves, but because they raven and destroy?

If it be objected that this will reduce very low, or almost to nothing, this test; because it will then be brought to this, that we are to examine the doctrine; which is implied in our

* 1 Tim. iv. 2.

hearing it, I will say that this is what I apprehend to be precisely the duty required of us all, according to our respective abilities; and that it is by no means unnecessary to urge it, since but too many are apt to hear without considering. If again it be said that this is a matter of too much difficulty for the multitude, who could better judge of the moral conduct of the preacher; I must answer, that the difficulty will be at least as great in the one case as in the other; nay it will be perhaps greater in that which I am combating; for if we refer to the other parts of scripture for the sort of immorality which is supposed to distinguish false teachers, we shall find it not to be such vices as shock the universal sense of mankind; not any gross sensuality or debauchery; but rather such as are by no means incompatible with an appearance of holiness and integrity; such as therefore are very likely to deceive the unwary. We are told of their "making a fair shew in the "flesh*," of "their creeping into houses, and "leading captive silly women†;" of their dealing in or professing "oppositions of science "falsely so called‡," nay, of their having a "form "of godliness‖." All this under the impulse of ambition, of vanity, and of covetousness;

* Gal. vi. 12. † 2 Tim. iii. 6. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.
‖ 2 Tim. iii. 5.

which are vices apt to be disguised under so many forms, that they are not, I apprehend, at all more obvious to ordinary understandings than the tendency and effect of doctrines. And indeed one way of judging of that tendency, and of those effects, though not an infallible or the most sure one, will still be to observe the change which is produced as well upon the preachers as upon the hearers, in respect of their way of living as well as of thinking.

It will be material to bear this in mind, because the real or supposed integrity of life, and purity of conversation in the leaders of sects, are, not unfrequently and even with a degree of triumph, brought forward as a justification, and even recommendation, of the schism which they cause and the heresy which they profess.

Whereas, even if their pretensions in this respect were allowed to the full extent, it would prove little or nothing: for if schism and heresy be sinful, and a man be shewn to be guilty of one or both of these, how can it be argued that he shall be justified, or can be encouraged in the commission of them, by the absence of any, nay of every other sin? Besides, we must also not forget, that in all religious contests, an appearance of greater sanctity must necessarily have considerable weight: and it is in fact one of the means which all those who set

themselves up against any establishment would, out of mere worldly wisdom, and in order to carry their ends, seek to employ and make a shew of. We accordingly find that most leaders of sects have in reality affected to make such a display, not only of great virtue, but of peculiar austerity and mortification. This was the case with the Essenes, the Montanists, nay with most of the Gnostics and Manicheans. It was also particularly the case with the authors of those institutions which are now universally allowed to have been pernicious and ill-judged: I mean the founders of monastic orders, who grew into favour and power only by the opinion which was entertained of their extraordinary holiness, and the rigour with which they abstained even from what was lawful, from every thing which was connected with indulgence and pleasure. We must not, therefore, as it clearly follows, be detained by any such pretensions, from examining into the soundness of any doctrine, or trying it by its proper standard; still less should they operate to restrain us from reproving every approach to heresy and schism.

This digression into which I have been led to enter, rather more at large than I intended, will, I trust, appear not inapplicable to my general subject. It will also, I conceive, be shewn to bear with considerable force upon certain

other topics which are much in vogue, and which it may be proper in the first instance, and before I proceed further, to dispose of.

First it is usual for the apologists of schism or of other errors, to argue that we are not to press an adversary with any consequences of the doctrines professed by him, which he disclaims or does not avow. Now, if by this nothing more is meant than that it is not always to be concluded that the individual himself is aware of all the consequences which may follow from the introduction of his doctrine; that we are not therefore to suppose him to have actually intended to do all the mischief which we can shew that he has done, or may be justly afraid that he will do; if no more be meant than that the severity of personal invective should be moderated, and as much forbearance exercised as may be possible without injury to the truth; I have no sort of objection to the proposition, nor can I have the least desire to see controversy carried on in any way but such as is strictly consistent with Christian charity. But, if it be meant by this, that we are to be prevented from impeaching a doctrine or combating a sect, upon any other grounds than such as our opponents themselves profess to stand upon, that we are to charge them with no results, or deductions from their principles, but

such as they themselves present to our view; if we are not to be at liberty to detect latent mischief and to trace falsehood, whether involuntary or designed, under all its forms and through all its disguises; I must decidedly protest against any such proposition. I must say that this is a mode of contending for the truth which is not to be prescribed to us, which would operate most unfavourably against the most sincere advocates of the gospel; which would, in every case, give to the impugners of the word, whether heretics or infidels, an undue advantage both with respect to the mode of attack and to that of defence. I must add that it would further take from us the power of following as implicitly and as fully as we ought, this direction or precept of our Saviour which is contained in my text; for I contend that the consequences of a doctrine are precisely the "fruits" of which he there speaks. It is from these that we are particularly called upon to judge whether it spring from its proper source, whether it be truly derived from the spirit; nor are we to be stopped from this mode of reasoning, by any protest which may be made on behalf of any individual, even though we should be disposed to give it the fullest credit, as far as it relates to the man himself.

When, for example, we are considering cer-

tain tenets which are prevalent in these times, and we shew, as every man may shew, that the doctrine of absolute decrees naturally leads to the very extent of antinomianism; and that, in truth, it has that effect with the great body of those who entertain it; we must not be told that we argue unfairly, because Calvin himself never avowed, and never, in practice, fell into that error, because the enlightened and well-instructed members of the sect neither profess nor act according to such abomination. Admitting, most fully, all these claims, must we not be allowed to say, that in being careful to "maintain good works," and living uprightly, these persons may be said to act inconsistently with their tenets, that the praise of consistency rather belongs to those whose conduct is different? That, therefore, what is a snare to the weak and the unlearned, can never be the doctrine which came from Christ? So, when the advocates of the Romish Church defend themselves from the charge of idolatry by distinguishing the honour which they pay to their saints from the worship which is due to God, when they assert that they do not bow down before images, in any sense which is criminal, shall we not, even if we were, in mere excess of candour, inclined to admit this to be the case with the doctors of their church, deny that these are the sentiments of the vulgar? Shall we

not urge, that these are distinctions not understood by the unlearned, who do, in fact, pray to their saints and to their images, with even greater fervour than to God? and, is not the conclusion legitimate, that this doctrine and practice, if they were not, as they are, abominable in themselves, yet in their direct consequences lead to evil, and ought to be rejected?

Another topic, to which I have already in part alluded, which is, indeed, considered as one in special use among dissenters, which is brought forward, upon every occasion, to justify those who have nothing else to say for themselves, is, that, supposing them to be in an error, yet, as they are sincere in their belief, they must be as acceptable to God as those whose faith is in ever so great a degree more correct. Hence it is inferred, that the insisting upon the particular tenets of any church, the laying any stress upon joining in any particular communion, is an intolerable usurpation, that it is a presuming most unjustifiably to lord it over the consciences of others, who need only look to themselves, and judge for themselves. The main proposition, I cannot more strongly put, than in the words of the learned prelate, to whom, and to whose tenets, I have before alluded, and who was the first, (among our divines, at least,) who adopted and recommended the maxim. "The favour of God," said his Lordship,

"follows sincerity, considered as such, and conse-
" quently equally follows every equal degree of sin-
" cerity."* The unsoundness and the pernicious tendency of this doctrine cannot be more clearly shewn in the first instance, than by applying our Saviour's rule, and considering the consequences which result from such a mode of reasoning. I cannot do this better, than by taking the words of that justly celebrated writer, and pious man, who never received a word of reply from the principal in that controversy, though he was generally allowed to have been the bishops' most formidable antagonist.[1] "If," says he, " it be sincerity as such that procures
" the favour of God, then it is sincerity, inde-
" pendent and exclusive of any particular way
" of worship; and, if the favour of God equally
" follows every equal degree of sincerity, then
" it is impossible that there should be any
" difference, either as to merit of happiness
" between a sincere martyr and a sincere perse-

* Preservative against the principles and practices of the Nonjurors. 3d Ed. p. 91.

[1] See as to this, Wm. Law's 3d Letter, in the beginning, where he most deservedly lashes the bishop for declining to answer him, " because he was not a man sufficiently considerable." The bishop and his adherents were as studiously anxious as possible, to shew a contempt of Wm. Law, which they could not feel. See the catalogue referred to in note 7 to sermon 1. Observe too, that Wm. Law's Letters have gone through eight editions, without reckoning their being reprinted in the Scholar Arm'd.

"cutor; and he that burns the christian, if he "be but in earnest, has the same title to a re- "ward for it, as he that is burnt for believing "in Christ."* "I hope," Wm. Law says afterwards, "that there is mercy in store for all "sorts of people, however erroneous in their "way of worshipping God; but cannot believe, "that to be a sincere christian, is to be no "more in the favour of God, than to be a sin- "cere deist, or a sincere destroyer of chris- "tians." "It will be allowed," he goes on most justly, "that sincerity is a necessary prin- "ciple of true religion; and that, without it, "all the most specious appearances of virtue are "nothing worth: but still, neither common "sense, nor plain scripture will suffer me to "think that, when our Saviour was on earth, "they were as much in the favour of God, who "sincerely refused to be his disciples, and sin- "cerely called for his crucifixion, as those who "sincerely left all and followed him. If they "were, what has become of that 'blessedness "in believing,' so often mentioned in scripture? "Or where is the happiness of the gospel reve- "lation if they are as well who refuse it sin- "cerely, as they who embrace it with inte- "grity?"†

* William Law's 1st Letter to the bishop of Bangor, reprinted in Scolar Arm'd, &c. Vol. i. p. 331.

† Ibid, p. 332.

The case here put, is an extreme one, but it is not the less a case naturally and fairly arising out of the position which is combated. It is so taken in order more strongly to shew the absurdity of the position in general, but the reasoning applies equally to all cases; it equally affects schismatics and heretics as it does infidels. Whatever is said of receiving the gospel, must be taken of the *proper* receiving and right interpretation of it. He that distorts or misconstrues, or only partially receives the word of God, is undoubtedly guilty of sin, and must bear the punishment to which he is thus become liable. "He that shall break the least of "these commandments," says our Lord, "and "shall teach men so, shall be least in the king-"dom of God." But there is no commandment so strongly or so strictly enjoined by Christ, or his apostles, as that of living at peace and in unity with one another. It is also repeatedly and over and over again applied to the communion of Christians in their worship of God. Now, if it clearly appear, as it certainly does, that the apostles, after having established the different churches, left behind them successors regularly appointed to govern them, and to keep up the succession; if such was the authority actually conveyed to Titus and to Timothy, and if the succession have been so kept up, whether under the name of apostles, of an-

gels, of superintendants, or the more general, and now appropriate term, of bishops,* can any one imagine or say, that it was, or is lawful, under any pretence of sincerity, or otherwise, to break that order? Nay, if, even without reference to the apostles, we say, what nobody can deny, that, from as far back as we have any account of the churches, they have been governed by such officers as the bishops are now; if such was the custom of ages universally acquiesced in, how shall they be justified, who, in later times, under colour of bringing in greater purity or sanctity, or still more, from any private or political views of their own, set up a new mode of governing the church, and thus gave a beginning to the various schisms and dissentions which, from that time to this, have broke, and still break her unity and disturb her peace? In these, as in other cases, a positive evil is produced, a direct trangression of God's Ordinance in breaking the unity of the church takes place. In these, therefore, sincerity can no more be a justification, than in the case of any other transgression.

But, further to advert to this plea of sincerity, it were well, if they who make it for

* All this is, in fact, admitted, and argued upon by Bishop Hoadly, when he was only Mr. Hoadly, in his "Reasonableness of Conformity," and "Defence of Episcopal Ordination." See also, what has been said in note 12, upon sermon ii.

themselves, or for others, thoroughly considered all that it implies, and what sort of responsibility they take upon themselves, who would rest their hope of salvation simply upon that ground. For he who asserts his innocence, simply because he is sincere, does virtually assert that, in forming his judgment, he took every precaution not to be deceived, that he was swayed by no prejudice, moved by no passion, that, through the whole of the examination he preserved the same integrity and purity of intention, the same labour and patience of investigation, that he harboured no wish, but that of arriving at the truth[s]. That this is not the case with every

[s] I might quote even Hoadly as using language little less strong than mine. After admitting, that those persons who will be persuaded by no arguments, that a compliance with the terms required by the Established Church is lawful, are bound to separate from our church: he adds, "But then I leave this upon their minds, "that they are to be accountable to God for the error of their judg- "ments, as well as for the vices of their practice; especially such "errors as carry along with them sad and pernicious consequences, "and tend to destroy christian charity; and that, therefore, they "will most certainly be punished as persons guilty of a needless se- "paration, if it be found at last, that prejudice, or passion, or "hatred, or any worldly design hath blinded their eyes and hinder- "ed them from seeing the truth, or attending to it, and embracing "it." He adds, afterwards, in the same page, some remarkable words. "The effects and consequences of separation are dismal "and horrible, the effects of unity blessed and glorious; and, "therefore, it is, that I say that they" (that is the separatists) "ought not to acquiesce in their former judgments though never "so settled and established, but to be disposed to alter them when

individual, nay, that it is the case with very few of the race of man, the scripture itself sufficiently points out. We are there told, that "the heart is deceitful above all things." We know, indeed, and must have observed in ourselves, as in others, how almost insensibly we are led to embrace opinions which are agreeable to our temporal interests, or are flattering to our passions and to our prejudices. It is only from the consideration of this disposition in man, that we can satisfactorily account for that blindness with which we are told that men are sometimes visited; when "God sends upon "them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*," when they "see not with their "eyes, neither hear with their ears," when "their hearts are hardened†," all which we rightly consider as a judicial delusion, a judicial blindness, deafness, and hardening. The truth is, that men but too often desire to be deceived, and then God gives them up to their own imaginations.

"reasons are offered against them. They are bound to incline to "unity rather than division, to conformity rather than separation, "and therefore are bound never to be averse to conviction, &c. Reasonableness of Conformity, p. 183. 3d Edit. How would the number of dissenters be diminished, if they would but act upon these principles! And, how different was the language of this same man, when afterwards engaged in political and party contest!

* 2 Thessal. ii. 11. † Matth. xiii. 15. John xii. 40.

That, indeed, God will not leave any man in error, who only errs from weakness, or even from a misguided zeal, might be presumed from more than one example of that kind which is brought to our notice in the scriptures. But still, however sincere or well intentioned they might be who so erred, they are no where considered as innocent and free from sin, while they continued in error. St. Paul expressly, and more than once, condemns himself for having persecuted the church, although he did it "ignorantly and in unbelief." He calls himself "a blasphemer, and injurious*." Similar to this was the language of Peter to the Jews, at his first preaching, when, having charged them with killing the Prince of Life, he added, "Now, brethren, I wot that ye did "it ignorantly, as did also your rulers." Yet his conclusion was not that they were thereby justified. On the contrary, his exhortation was to "repent and be converted, that their sins "might be blotted out†." So little warrant is there in the word of God for supposing that men can be in favour with him while they continue in error, however involuntary. There will, indeed, be found no sort of authority for any such "flattering unction." The commission which is given to the preachers of the gos-

* 1 Tim. i. 13. † Acts iii. 17, 19.

pel is to teach men to believe in Christ, in a crucified Saviour, in the benefits of his passion, to receive him as the only begotten son of God. The truth is to be tendered to them, and they are to receive it, or to reject it at their peril. We have no business even to inquire whether there be such a thing as invincible blindness, as error which could not be avoided; that is among "the secret things of God*," which he will decide, (as we may be sure,) not only with justice, but with mercy. The language which the gospel speaks in that respect, is the same which our Saviour held to Peter, when the apostle was improperly inquisitive into what was to be the fate of John; "What is that to thee? Follow thou me†." And, before that, when in the same spirit, some of his disciples asked him, "if there were many that should be "saved?" He gave them no answer to their question, but, in the strongest manner, pointed out the impropriety of it, by recalling their attention to what was their individual duty. "Strive ye," said he, "to enter in at the "straight gate, for many, I say unto you, will "seek to enter in, and shall not be able‡," which is plainly equivalent to a direct reproof; as if he had said to them, "take care of your "own salvation, and trouble not yourselves

* Deut. xxix. 29. † John xxi. 22. ‡ Luke xiii. 24.

"about others; take heed that you be not among "the number of those who shall fail to enter in, "for that, and not any general speculation, is "your concern." What, indeed, can be the effect of indulging in such conjectures, and inculcating such theories? What can be the "fruits" of such doctrine, but to diminish the zeal of men, to make them less earnest in the pursuit of religious truth? When they are told that it matters not what is their opinion of Christ, what they think of the covenant in his blood, what way they take to draw near to God, provided they are but in earnest in doing it, what can follow, but that lukewarmness and indifference which our Lord reprobated so strongly in the church of Laodicea, and which seemed more abominable in his sight even than total unbelief? "I would," he says, "that thou "wert either hot or cold*." Our blessed Lord hath told us "that strait is the gate, and nar-"row is the way that leadeth to eternal life," and shall we listen to those, who, in direct contradiction to him, are labouring by all possible means to extend the platform, and to represent the way as so broad, that all men of all possible denominations may equally walk in it, and be saved? Was this the language, not only of Christ, but of his apostles? Was it the language of St. Paul to the Judaizing teachers among the Galati-

* Rev. iii. 15.

ans? Though what men could have had more to say in behalf of their peculiar tenets? They were recommending a practice which had originally been instituted from God, in which they had been educated, which some of the apostles had favoured, with which Paul himself had occasionally complied: had they not then, more than any others in later ages, reason to argue that surely their errors were harmless; that they preached good morality; that they ought to be at liberty in such matters as these. Yet what was the language of St. Paul? "Behold," says he, "I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circum-"cised," (that is if contrary to my gospel ye hold circumcision to be necessary) "Christ "shall profit you nothing*." Now this was a mere point of faith: the thing itself was perfectly indifferent, except as it derogated from the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ; and yet what words can be stronger?

Again our Lord says, "He that believeth "and is baptized shall be saved, but he that be-"lieveth not shall be damned†." And with a reference to this passage it has been well asked of those whose tenets I am combating, and in opposition to bishop Hoadly's position: "Will "you say that all unbelievers were insincere, or

* Gal. v. 2. † Mark xvi. 16.

" that those who were damned were in equal " favour with those who were saved*?"

This is a dilemma of which neither alternative will be allowed, by those at least who on all occasions appear to feel abundant charity for the assailants of the gospel. And what then becomes of the words of Christ? What meaning shall we attach to them?

Proceeding upon the same grounds with respect to schismatics and heretics, I will ask, not, whether they were all insincere; but, will you say they were all the contrary? that they had all of them that sincerity which is to compensate for every error? Surely this will not be said; it will not be pretended that at least those men who are so strongly reprobated by St. Paul and his brethren, who either broached heretical doctrines or divided the church with parties, in direct opposition to the immediate successors of Christ, it cannot be said, as I have before observed, that they could be led into such conduct by any doubts which they entertained, by any real difficulty in understanding the terms of the gospel; for let there have been what obscurity there might in the epistles of St. Paul, or in any other of the apostolic writings, still, as long as the authors of those writings were living, while there was yet on earth one of the

* William Law's First Letter, p. 334.

men to whom the propagation of that gospel had originally been entrusted, there could be no doubt or difficulty but what could be easily removed. The way was plain for those who meant honestly; they knew to whom they should apply for instruction. They, therefore, who, instead of taking that course, chose to trust to their own imaginations, nay, to oppose themselves to those very persons who alone were able to teach them, and who were beyond all question commissioned from God for that very purpose, it is impossible, I say, that they can by any construction be allowed such a plea. They, however, undoubtedly professed, as all sectaries profess, to be sincere: yet, I must insist, it is no want of charity to say that they were not so, that they must have acted contrary to the dictates of their conscience, if they would fairly have listened to her voice.

If then it must be allowed that there have been persons dissenting from the body of the church who were not sincere in that dissent; if the plea be not valid as to some, it must be permitted to us in every case of this sort, as in all other sorts of cases, not only to examine with strictness every circumstance belonging to the propagation of any new doctrine, as well as to the doctrine itself; but we must also be permitted to receive with great caution and not rashly to admit the claim of its professors to

rectitude of intention and integrity of heart. Again, I say, what has been may be; and if there could be factions and parties in the church, in the face of such men as Paul and John, what is more natural than to expect that, in religious, as well as in civil matters, there will at all times be found individuals actuated by a spirit of ambition, and studying to distinguish themselves, rather than to establish the truth?

We must not, therefore, be thought uncharitable if we judge men, not according to what they profess, but according to what we conceive to be the real truth, according to what is laid down in the scriptures. And if, after having shewn, to the satisfaction of any fair man, the falsehood of a tenet, we scruple not to pronounce it to be pernicious, and to warn others against the reception of it; nay, reprobate when the occasion calls for it, those who were its authors and maintainers, leaving their final condemnation or absolution to the judgment of a merciful God, what is this but discharging our duty? Nor can we allow to the abettors of any one false doctrine, a greater right to found themselves in their sincerity, than to those of any other, however apparently more absurd. For there is no doctrine so horrible which has not had among its followers those who were at the moment persuaded that they were acting rightly. "The time cometh," says our blessed

Lord to his disciples, "when he that killeth you "shall think that he doeth God service*." And indeed can we doubt but that among the thousands of persecutors which the Romish church has poured forth from its bosom, there have been numbers who were sincere, as far as that word can be restrained to a man's being confident at the time that he is justified in what he is doing. They did it indeed because they in fact "knew not" Christ, nor "the Father." And the circumstances under which they were wrought up to such a persuasion will undoubtedly come into consideration before God in their due season. But still I see no reason to say that they were not, perhaps fully, as well entitled to the plea of sincerity as any of those separatists who the most strongly claim it for themselves at this day. It will at least not be denied, but that they might be as sincere as Calvin was when he brought Servetus to the stake; or as the counter remonstrants were, when, at the Synod of Dort, they so grievously persecuted the Arminians.

Whoever will candidly weigh these things, must, I think, agree with me that to lay any great stress upon the plea of sincerity, further than as it is supported by facts, would be a mere fallacy. Still less should we be justified

* John xvi. 2.

in giving to it that extensive operation which was contended for by bishop Hoadly and his adherents, and which has been ever since and is now relied upon by the great body of dissenters, and (if I were not afraid of giving offence, I would add too) of infidels.

It may be observed further, that to argue from the alleged sincerity of a teacher to the soundness of his doctrine, is to reverse the order of things. We ought rather to conclude that a man is sincere in proportion as we find that his doctrine is sound. In the former case we evidently found ourselves on presumption only; in the latter case we have at least something solid to build upon. After all, sincerity is a plea which every individual may, and must, make. No man indeed can be heard unless he makes it. Of the truth of it however God only can judge. Therefore, abstractedly taken, it can form no ground of reasoning, or at least can supply no proof.

If then the sincerity of its professors, though it were ever so well established, is no reason why we should cease to combat heresy, or to deprecate the continuance of any schism, we shall not neither be stopped, I apprehend, by that other proposition, which is sometimes urged either expressly or by implication, that there should be no distinction of communions among us, but that all persons who are called after the

name of Christ, whatever be their peculiar opinions, should all be considered as belonging to the church; and all should be joined together in the most general and comprehensive union. Now, if it were only meant by this that no over nice or captious inquiry, nay, that no inquiry at all should be made into the faith of those who come to attend at our established places of worship; if it be only claimed that all who are desirous so to do, should be allowed to join in prayer, and be admitted to the benefit of the sacraments as they are administered among us, this is, in fact, the practice of our church, whose terms of what is called lay communion are as easy and open to all descriptions of men as it is possible. There is no individual whatever who is rejected, if he will come and conform to the order which is established; and at a time when the old and stricter notions prevailed among the dissenters, we know that some of their teachers (Baxter among the rest) who declined themselves to minister according to the form prescribed in our liturgy, not unfrequently attended our service in the number of the congregation, and were known as occasional conformists.

But what is asked is something more, it is indeed much more; it is what, when we come to examine it more closely, we shall find it impossible for us to grant without, in fact, giving

up what we conceive to be the foundations of our faith; without prevaricating, or appearing to prevaricate upon points of the greatest importance. It is required of us that we should adopt such a service and mode of worship as should have nothing distinctive or peculiar: which, indeed, except that the reading of the holy scriptures might form a part of it, might as well suit a Deist as a Christian.

Now, we might first inquire how far such a project is in any degree whatever feasible; whether, when a number of persons assemble together, amongst whom there is a great variety of opinions upon that very subject which is the occasion of their meeting, it is reasonable to expect that such a wonderful degree of discretion shall be found among them, as shall keep every single individual from touching upon the disputed points; or if touched upon shall keep him within those precise bounds, which shall effectually prevent any breach of harmony and want of good-humour. I think we might rather expect to find, what indeed has always taken place under such circumstances, much dispute; much heat, and much wrangling; in short, what the apostle calls "confusion and "every evil work*."

But, in truth, it is not difficult to shew that

* James iii. 16.

the ground upon which this is urged, has in reality, no existence; that there is no pretence for saying that such a state of things has ever existed. It is said by those who argue for this mode of proceeding, that in the early periods of Christianity, at its first preaching, nothing was required of men but the most general belief in Christ; that the disciples were not perplexed or harassed with the captious questions which have been since raised respecting the divinity of the Son or of the Holy Ghost, that these are all comparatively modern inventions, and therefore a belief in them or any of them is to be imposed on no man. Nay, there are not wanting those who choose to doubt whether even it was usual to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The command in St. Matthew indeed is express enough, but they find instances in the Acts of the Apostles, of persons who are said to have been "baptized in "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*." From the peculiar mention of one name among the three, they would infer that the other names were not used, and this too against the uniform testimony and usage of all antiquity, and against the direct command of our Lord. What on the contrary would any fair man conclude; what would best reconcile all the texts but the natural

* Acts viii. 16. x. 48. xix. 5.

inference, that as the name of Christ was that by which the converts were to be distinguished, it was deemed sufficient in those passages to specify that name only, without loading the narrative with the whole form at length; more especially as the only end of making any specification might be to distinguish this baptism from that of John, which is also referred to in the same book. I might ask too, if it be not a singular mode of disproving the divinity of our Saviour, to argue that in some instances his name only was used at the time when new members were added to the church by baptism?

But, not to go further into such disquisitions, and keeping to the main question, I say where can we, in any one point, find any such facility on the part of the apostles as is contended for in respect of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel? Where shall shall we trace any such indifference upon matters which came into controversy before them, as can lead us to suppose that they would have tolerated any sort of heretical opinion upon the subjects which are in these days the great causes of dissention among Christians? We have already seen how St. Paul treated the false teachers among the Galatians, and how little he appeared inclined to suffer them to go on with practices that were indifferent in themselves except as they bore upon the very

point which is now in dispute between the Socinians and the orthodox believers. For what he objected to them was, that by putting their trust in the ceremonies of the law they took from the efficacy of our Lord's sacrifice; that they did not consider his death as a sufficient atonement for their sins; that they relied upon themselves: points these, which directly bear upon the controversies relating to the person of Christ. It is needless to repeat the passages adduced by me in my last discourse, to shew the severity with which he reproves all such doctrines and those who taught them. But you will remember that so far was he from enlarging the terms of communion in order to comprehend such persons, that he expressly directs the disciples to "avoid" them. And, when he is instructing Titus as to the manner in which he should rule the church of Crete, he expressly directs him to "reject" every heretic who continued such after a first and a second admonition. It will not, I presume, be denied me that St. Paul meant something when he used the word "heretic;" or when he directed such a one to be "rejected." It will not neither, I think, be disputed that to "reject" and to "admit" are words of directly opposite signification. And therefore this single passage might suffice to prove that St. Paul did not consider the mere

assuming of the name of Christian to be a sufficient qualification for constituting a member of the true church.

But further, what was the opinion of St. John? Of that apostle whose whole soul seems to have been peculiarly devoted to love and charity, whose writings breathe the warmest sentiments of affection, and hardly contain a line which is not calculated to unite the disciples more closely together? Had he then any notions of such general comprehension? Was he willing to overlook what are called in these days trifling differences of opinion? I formerly cited one passage in which is shewn his peculiar abhorrence of those who maintained false doctrines. What now were the doctrines which he so reprobated, and how did he characterize them? Why, "Many deceivers," says he, "are "entered into the world who confess not that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." "This," he adds, "is a deceiver and antichrist*." The same language he holds in his first epistle. In that epistle too he makes it an article of faith that Christ is the son of God, and in such terms as shew that he meant it in a peculiar sense. But now, let me ask, would St. John have admitted into his communion the man whom he calls "antichrist?" Whom he bids the

* 2 John v. 7.

elect lady not to "receive," nor "bid him God "speed?" No one will say that he would.

I am not now urging the authority of St. John for this or that opinion respecting our Lord, but this I contend for, and it must be admitted to me, that there were tenets maintained by him respecting the person and nature of Christ which he required all men to believe, and which he would not suffer to be contradicted, neither would allow those who thought otherwise to be considered as members of the church.

And indeed, how impracticable any such union of all sects would be, will appear more clearly as we go on to inquire ever so cursorily, as I now proceed to do, of what description were the sects which prevailed in the apostolical age, and in the ages immediately succeeding. It will be found that the errors which they maintained were so monstrous snd so contrary to scripture, that it was utterly impossible for any Christian to have joined in communion with them, without being exposed to the most imminent danger of "making shipwreck as con- "cerning the faith*," or without "partaking "of their evil deeds†." They are such as no man now thinks defensible, or otherwise than most grossly absurd. Much labour indeed has been bestowed a little to take off from the ab-

* 1 Tim. i. 19. † 2 John v. 11.

horrence in which they have generally been held*; but, after all the pains which ingenious and learned men have bestowed upon the subject, enough will remain of apparent folly and vanity in the doctrines, to justify us in applying to them and to their holders the strongest terms of reprobation, and to warrant us in concluding that the manifest "fruits" of schisms are among the reasons why we should avoid them.

In calling these the "fruits" of schism; in applying the term to all heresies, or nearly to all of them, I might shelter myself under the authority of one of the most eminent of the fathers, who says, with great truth as well as force, that "there is no schism which does not "devise for itself some heresy by which it may "justify its departing from the church[a]." This is indeed so true that we should, I apprehend,

* In particular by Beausobre in his Historie de Manichee, and Lardner in his History of Heretics.

[a] The whole passage is remarkable, and I cite it the rather as it shews how impossible it is to treat of schism without being led to say something of heresy. He considers the separating from the church as a sort of condemnation which the heretics pronounce upon themselves. "Heretici in semetipsos sententiam ferunt suo "arbitrio de ecclesia recedentes; quæ recessio propriæ conscientiæ "videtur esse damnatio. Inter hæresin et schisma hoc esse arbi- "trantur quod hæresis perversum dogma habeat: schisma propter "episcopalem dissentionem ab ecclesiâ separetur; quod quidem "in principio aliquâ ex parte intelligi potest. Cæterum nullum "schisma non sibi aliquam confingit hæresin ut recte ab ecclesiâ "recessisse videatur." Hieron. in Titum. Vol. iv. pars 1. p. 439. Ed. Bened.

find it difficult, if not impossible, to point out in the whole range of ecclesiastical history, down at least to the time of the reformation, more than two schisms which were not of that description; and both these originated so entirely in views of ambition and struggles for power that they will not tend in any degree to reconcile us to that sort of separation. I mean, first, in the earlier ages of the church, the schism of the Donatists; and in later days, that other schism, or succession of schisms, which at different times exhibited to the world two distinct sets of Popes opposed to each other; the principal instance of which was continued by succeeding elections among the contending parties for more than half a century. Both this and the former were but contentions who should be the ruler of a particular church. The one and the other was a dispute about the validity of this or that election, kept up certainly to the great disturbance of the Christian world in those days, but not in itself involving any points of doctrine. The Donatists indeed in the course of the contest came to maintain some opinions, and gave into certain practices which could hardly be called orthodox, and so far came under the general observation of St Jerome[s]. But, however that may be, all the

[s] This is what is observed by Austin, in Libro de Hæresibus, Vol. viii. p. 16. "Pertinaci dissentione firmatâ, in hæresin schisma "verterunt."

other sects which the ancients knew of, and of which we have accounts, founded themselves in their separation from the church upon points of doctrine. What these were I shall now proceed shortly to point out, simply in order to shew their utter incongruity and irreconcileable difference with the true faith, and the impossibility of any communion subsisting between them and the true church.

They consisted principally of three classes, for I mean to take a view only of the most eminent and numerous.

The first were the Ebionites, who purely and unqualifiedly denied our Saviour to be any more than mere man, born as well of Joseph as of Mary. The next were the Gnostics, whose peculiar tenets were not confined to the person or nature of Christ, but to the creation and the whole economy of the world. Last came the Manicheans, who, to all these, or similar positions, superadded the notion of two distinct principles; an evil principle residing in matter co-eternal with the good principle, and in constant opposition to him.

As to the first class, I purposely abstain from any inquiry, whether, and how far they were distinct from the Nazarenes, and whether they were many in number, as has been asserted, or few; because these are points which have been

fully discussed by one who could leave little to be said by those who come after him*. But, one observation I cannot help making, that, whether the Ebionites and the Nazarenes were one or different sects, they, most clearly, both of them, held that heresy which it was the professed object of two of the most considerable epistles of St. Paul to oppose and put down, and which, as we have seen, is reprobated by him with such peculiar severity in the Epistle to the Galatians; which is also noted and condemned in other epistles of that apostle. Being then thus convicted of gross and pernicious error in the judgment of an inspired apostle, it does seem to me a great deal too much to take them, as has lately been done, for important evidences to the purity or soundness of any doctrine. Being shewn to have been so perversely blind in a very important point, can we think them worthy of credit, or authorities to be used in any question which admits of dispute; more especially in one, which, as I have shewn before, was directly connected with this very error? add to this, that they denied the authenticity of a great part of scripture. Of the gospels, they mostly admitted only that of

* Bishop Horsley in his well known controversy with Dr. Priestley.

St. Matthew, or rather a gospel of their own, made up from his, in which all those passages which controverted their tenets were omitted. Another strong reason this, why they could never have joined in communion with the orthodox, nor are now to be considered as admissible witnesses for the truth.

This was also the case with the Gnostics, who, to these errors superadded, as before observed, other more extravagant fancies; for they, or most of them, held that Jesus was indeed the son of Joseph, as well as of Mary; but that Christ only entered into him upon his baptism, and continued with him only until his crucifixion. They held also, that Christ was of a nature distinct from God and inferior to him, one of those beings whom they called Eons. That, by another of these, and not by Christ or by God the world was created; and that it was in order to remedy the evil produced by this creator of the world or demiurgus that Christ came upon earth.

The manner in which Manes and his followers refined, as it were, yet more upon these doctrines, set them still further from the truth. Their two principles, added to such errors of the Gnostics as they adopted, were at the most open variance with the scriptures; of which, therefore, both these descriptions of sectaries, as

well as the other, rejected all such parts as they could not in any way bring to square with their doctrines.

Superadded to these, or blended with some or most of these heresies was that of the Docetæ, who got rid of their difficulties by maintaining that Christ did not come in the flesh, but that his appearance was a mere allusion, an opinion, which, as we have seen, was declared by St. John to be that of "a deceiver and Anti-"christ."

Extravagant as all this may appear to us, it is not the least remarkable circumstance of the whole, that such tenets could have obtained so considerable a degree of currency. Not only, however, they had many followers immediately on their first appearance, but they even continued to flourish long after the Judaizing Christians had ceased to exist: and the Manicheans are supposed to have retained their influence to a very late period. Indeed, it was among the calumnies which the Romanists propagated against the first reformers, that their doctrines were connected with those of Manes[a].

[a] This was particularly the case with the Valdenses and Albigenses, whose doctrines, as I have shewn in my reply to Dr. Milner's Observations, were studiously confounded with those of the remnant of the Manicheans and Paulicians, which at that time subsisted. This sort of calumny is, I believe, not quite gone

In this short view which I have taken of the earlier corruptions of christianity, I have confined myself to the mention of these heresies, because they are such as are now universally given up, because, however, they belonged to the principal and the most numerous sects[7] which were known in the church for the three or four first ages; and they will therefore sufficiently illustrate the position, on account of which I have gone back to periods so remote. I have said nothing of the Sabellian or of the Arian heresy, for two reasons: first, because I should not be allowed, without opposition, to treat of them in the manner in which I have spoken of the others, as involving any absurdity, or as standing in direct opposition to the scriptures. Next,

by; at least, if I mistake not, the Abbé Barruel has had recourse to it in his late work upon Jacobinism. It is much to be lamented, that Beausobre did not live to fulfil the intention which he had of publishing his History of the Later Manicheans, or Heretics, persecuted under that name. This would have been a work not only curious, but of great utility.

[7] The Montanists became chiefly considerable from Tertullian's having adopted their errors; and, except as to their idea about Montanus himself, do not seem to have been heretics much more than many founders of monastic orders. The question of the Pelagian heresy is of late years become so involved with that of the Socinian, and with the opposite errors of the Antinomians or Fatalists, that it could not class among the lists of those that are now undisputed.

because having been revived in later times, and having had, and having now many adherents, they may more properly be noticed, when I come to speak of the actual state of the church, as it exists in our days.

Of Arianism only, I must be allowed now to say, that its origin was such as fully corresponds with the idea which the apostles give us of the schisms and heresies of their time. For it is on all sides agreed, that it was first brought forward in a dispute which arose between Arius and his bishop; and in which the presbyter was striving to shew his superiority in knowledge over the man who was his superior in rank. It began in vanity, it produced the most serious contentions, and gave the first example of regularly organized persecution. Both in its cause and effects it may therefore be said to have been completely unchristian.

It will be obvious, moreover, that I have abstained from saying any thing of many very odious imputations, which, justly or unjustly, were cast upon the heretics of those days, as if they were not less impure and abominable in their lives, than they were erroneous in their doctrines. That the accounts which we have received of them in this respect are not without foundation it is reasonable to believe, and was natural to expect; because disorder of one kind is very

apt to produce disorder of another; a bad theory may well be said to lead to bad practice; yet does it appear plain enough, that there has been much exaggeration used, and no small number of mistakes committed.

Nor, indeed, can it be shewn, that the leaders of these sects did actually, either by example or practice, directly encourage any such impure or disorderly mode of living: nay, I rather think that they professed, and perhaps practised a greater severity of manners, and more strict self-denial, which will afford proof of what I have before alleged, that we must not too implicitly consider sanctity of life as a proof either of sincerity in the individual, or truth in his doctrine.

There were, indeed, some sects and some individuals, whose precepts and conversation were avowedly sensual. Such were the Nicolaitans, and such, most probably, were Hymenæus and Philetus, who denied the resurrection: a denial which we can hardly conceive that any man could make, except with a view of encouraging himself and others in licentious habits.

It is probable too, that among the Gnostics and the followers of Manes, there were those who, finding the rule of their masters too strict, applied themselves to the bending of it, so as to make it favour their own particular propensi-

ties. This is, indeed, what will always happen. It happened most signally among the monks of later times. Where unnatural restraints are imposed, they will be eluded or broken through, and cause men to err in the opposite extreme. The commandments of God, on the other hand, are known by this, that they enjoin nothing but what is practicable by all.

Such are the "fruits" which appear to have been produced in the earlier ages by a departure from the church; thus were men led into wild and idle, nay, and impious speculations. And I may now ask, whether such tenets are not wholly and irreconcileably at war with the true faith? Whether there could, for a moment, have existed any fellowship, any community of worship between the real disciples of Christ and such dreamers? I will ask further, whether these instances do not strikingly corroborate all that I have said of the danger as well as sinfulness, as also of the natural progress of schism; whether, reasoning from what we have hitherto seen, we are not warranted in the conclusion, that, generally speaking, every such departure, whether it be pure schism or mixed with heresy, originates in those causes to which it is attributed by the apostles; in pride, in ambition, and that love of distinction which is not unmixed with covetousness.

The means too, by which these schisms and these heresies were maintained and justified were uniformly the same; no less than the corrupting, the mutilating, or the perverting of the holy Scriptures: "the wresting of them" by men, "to their own destruction*." And I wish you the more to observe this, because it will be a main test by which you may judge of the separatists in later ages.

This is, indeed, only what we might expect. For it is only to those who approach him in the spirit of humility, of purity, and of meekness, that God will make himself known. The proud, the covetous, the ambitious, and the vain he "beholdeth afar off†." They who take up the Scriptures merely with a view of making them speak a language favourable to any pre-conceived notion of their own, or who, as I fear, but too many have done in our days, consider them as a field in which they may expatiate at will, and upon which they are at liberty to make a display of their ingenuity; all such, I say, will, in the end, only deceive themselves and others: they will be the dupes of their own imaginations. If we would really profit by the inspired writings, we must prepare ourselves in a very different manner. We must,

* 2 Peter iii. 16. † Psalm cxxxviii. 6. O. Y.

according to the exhortation of St. Paul, "as "new born babes desire the sincere milk of the "word;" then, and then only shall we partake of it in such a manner as that we "may grow "thereby*."

* 1 Peter ii. 2.

SERMON IV.

LUKE. xi. 35.

Take heed that the Light which is in thee be not Darkness.

IN the schisms and heresies of the early ages, to which in the close of my last discourse I adverted, we had occasion to see the spirit of ambition and of covetousness which is the presumed, and by the apostles declared original of all divisions in the church, operating indeed widely and among different sorts of people, but not assuming any great consistency of form, or acquiring any share of solid establishment. In succeeding times it pleased the Almighty, that to the temptations with which the church

was thus assailed from without, to the erroneous systems and the gaudy and complicated theories which were displayed to her view by those who had wilfully separated from her, another and a more severe trial should be superadded from within: that the false and corrupt doctrine by which the truth was to be obscured should proceed from those very persons to whom the oracles of God were in a special manner confided; that the flock of Christ should be led astray by those very rulers who were set over it for the express purpose of keeping it in the right path. This is what took place with the first appearance, and grew with the growth of the papal usurpations; till, at last, by the abominable and even impious tenets which came to be maintained by the church of Rome, almost the whole Christian world was reduced to the lamentable condition which is so forcibly marked out in my text. Thus it happened that "the light which was within them became darkness."

I need not, I should conceive, employ many words in shewing to you the propriety of this application; and that it is to such a state of things as I am describing that the words of Christ most particularly and distinctly refer. The parable or metaphor which is here used is sufficiently familiar in the New Testament to leave us no room to doubt its meaning. By

"the light" is every where meant the precepts, or rather the benefits of the gospel. Thus the true believers are called the "children of light*;" and they are bidden to "walk in the light," "to "believe in the light†." Of our Saviour it is said that he is "the true light which lighteth "every man that cometh into the world‡." In the same sense the apostles also are said to be "the light of the world‖." Reasoning upon this we shall find that if that which according to the parable of our Lord we may call "the "mind's eye," if our understanding be pure and free from prejudice or false principles, we shall receive "the light," we shall embrace the great truths of his gospel as we ought, and be properly directed in the way. If, on the contrary, it be distorted, obscured or pre-occupied by false apprehensions of any sort, we shall run the most imminent danger of being misled; we shall see in the scriptures what they were never intended to convey. We are therefore naturally warned not to suffer ourselves to be led away into the entertaining of any corruption of doctrine. "Take heed that the light which is "within thee be not darkness." And in the parallel passage in St. Matthew the consequence of such an error is very strongly expressed. "If

* Luke xvi. 8. Ephes. v. 8. † John xii. 35, 36.
‡ John i. 9. ‖ Mark v. 14.

"the light which is in thee be darkness, how "great is that darkness*!" How deplorable indeed must have been the situation of mankind, when, as the Psalmist says, "the things that "should have been for their wealth, were unto "them an occasion of falling†." If by the word "light" in this parable, any one should, as some do, rather suppose that nothing more than simply our reason or understanding is meant, even that will make no material difference; for it is certain that the tendency of the popish system was equally to cloud the understanding as to pervert the doctrine: indeed the one follows upon the other. In either case the sources of knowledge are obstructed or poisoned: "the light which is within us becomes "darkness."

That this was really the effect produced by the usurped domination and corrupt tenets of the Romish church in what are called the dark ages, will hardly be denied me; but I must go farther, and notwithstanding certain opinions which are rather generally entertained, I must express my full persuasion that no material change has since taken place in that church with respect to those very abuses, against which a faithful witness was borne in this very place even unto death. Still I must think that that

* Matt. vi. 23. † Psalm lxix. 23.

vigilance which was required on our part in former days, is not now to be laid aside. If, as I conceive the truth to be, the same spirit lives and is active, we are still to be guarded against it, though we should allow that its power to oppress the true believers be in some degree diminished. We must also labour, not by such odious means as were familiar to that church, but by those means which are not only lawful but prescribed to us in God's word, to prevent her influence from spreading. This is not only not contrary to the spirit of Christian charity, but it is even the most charitable work in which a Christian can be employed. For there is no labour which is so expressly enjoined to us as that of preserving the souls of men from error; as well as reclaiming and bringing them back to the truth whenever they have been led astray. Now there are no errors so thoroughly pernicious, or which have been the cause of so much mischief and of so much misery to mankind as those which are maintained by the see of Rome. That church indeed has this peculiar to herself, and which makes her, or made her in time past when men thought more seriously of these things, to be considered as the common and decided enemy of all other sects of Christians, however at variance among themselves in other respects, that she is most inveterately and determinately bent against the

diffusion of knowledge and freedom of investigation in religious matters; that she will suffer no man to see the doctrines of the gospel, but in her own false mirror, through the tainted medium in which they have by her been enveloped; that not only she suffers not the laity at large to read and comment upon the scriptures, but she does not permit the clergy itself, without a licence previously obtained, to open any one single book of controversy, to examine what objections have been made to their principles and practice. Now what tenet, or what invention of men could be so calculated to keep the people in darkness, nay, in that gross darkness to which, if taken at the time when the papal supremacy was at the height, we may truly say that history affords no parallel?

Indeed the abominable tendency of these and other popish doctrines is so apparent, and has been so universally recognized among us for more than two centuries, that it is perhaps partly owing to that circumstance that we have now come to look upon them as matters subject to no controversy, as calling for no animadversion. Nay, the very extravagance of them has contributed to this general indifference upon the subject, as men have been too apt to conclude that it was impossible that any person of common sense or common understanding, and having, as in this country

(blessed be God for it!) we yet have, the free use of his faculties would for a moment be deceived by them. And this opinion has gathered strength from the system which, either from prudence or from the want of ability to act otherwise, has been observed by the priests of that community for nearly a century. Ever since the reign of James the second, if we except some very recent and partial attempts[1], we

[1] I allude particularly to the controversy which took place a few years ago between the late Dr. Sturges and the popish bishop Dr. (then Mr.) Milner. It must be allowed that this was partial, as being confined to the two points of persecution and the observances of monkery. But it may be said to have been partial in another point of view, because it is clear enough, and it was in my opinion an unfortunate circumstance for the interests of what we consider as the true religion, that Dr. Sturges was led to enter into the controversy rather from anxiety to vindicate the character of his friend and patron bishop Hoadly from the attacks of Mr. Milner in his history of Winchester, than from a zeal for the principles upon which the reformation was really introduced: and of this (in many respects wrong) bias, which in some degree affected the whole of Dr. Sturges's argument, his opponent did not fail most amply to take advantage. This also it was, and this only, which led the late bishop Horsley to say (what Dr. M. so triumphantly brings forward, Gent. Mag. Sept. 1807.) that Dr. S. was worsted in the contest. Before this, another controversy on the persecuting tenets of the Romish church had been carried on between the late popish archbishop Dr. Butler, and those learned and excellent divines of the Irish church, the late bishop Woodward and Dr. Hales of Kilesandra, with very different success from that which I have just mentioned, and which Dr. Sturges had clearly not seen, or he might have given Dr. Milner a better answer to some of his assertions. Lastly, in consequence of my publishing in 1805, "A serious Ex-" amination of the Roman Catholic claims then depending in Par-

hear of no advocate for popery entering the lists against Protestants. Nay, with such care are their doctrines kept from the notice of all who can judge of them, that it is not without great difficulty that those who would combat their errors, can with sufficient evidence fix upon them the tenets which yet they are well known to maintain, and the effects of which are sufficiently visible in all the members of that church, more especially among the weak and the ignorant[2]. Hence it has come to pass that men are

"liament," both that point of persecution and also the Romish doctrine respecting oaths, and the power assumed by different popes of dispensing with them and of deposing kings at their pleasure, have been agitated between Dr. Milner and me, first in the Gentleman's Magazine, and afterwards in my "Sequel to the Serious "Examination." To this Dr. Milner made such an answer as he thought proper in "Certain Observations on the Sequel," extending to thirty-close printed pages, and annexed to a second edition of his "Case of Conscience solved." From the heap of abuse and personal slander as well as various mis-representations of myself and my argument, which are contained in that publication, I have, I hope, sufficiently, though necessarily somewhat at length, cleared myself in my "Reply to the Observations of the Doctor." The many pamphlets which have been published on what is called the Catholic question I have not noticed, as they all profess to consider the question in a political, rather than a religious point of view. I should, however, except from this certain "Remarks upon a "late Charge of the Bishop of Durham," and the answers and replies to which they have given birth.

[2] It was not without taking great pains and after much fruitless search, that I obtained a copy of Dod's Church History, which is the great authority with the papists in ecclesiastical matters, and in Dr. Milner's earlier publications most triumphantly cited. Of

so hardly persuaded to look into the question, or to believe that any danger can now be apprehended from that quarter.

This however is unquestionably a false conclusion and a delusive security. For these doctrines have once prevailed as over all Europe so especially in these kingdoms; and it is too much to aver that neither force nor fraud shall ever be successful in bringing them in again. They want not yet patrons many and powerful. I will add that the rage for proselytism still subsists and is not without effect[3]. And, if we

Dr, Hussey's (titular bishop of Waterford) famous Charge, I have also by great accident obtained a MS. copy. But I have been baffled in all my endeavours to procure a sight of the "Hibernia "Dominicana" of Dr. Burke, the former bishop of that see and historiographer to his order; some curious extracts from which were first brought forward by the late bishop (Woodward) of Cloyne, before mentioned in his present state of the church of Ireland, published for Cadell in 1787, a pamphlet which having already recommended to notice, I must again say contains most important facts as well as reasonings. This Dr. Burke I find mentioned by Dr. Milner, as being one of the great luminaries of the Irish clergy since the reformation. Why then is this light hid under a bushel? See Dr. Milner's inquiry into certain vulgar opinions, p. 15, where the reader may see a list of names as unknown to the world in general as they appear famous in Dr. M.'s eyes.

[3] The reader may see what I have said on the subject in my "Sequel to the serious Examination." He may also consider the means by which the conversions are brought about; and in particular that notable miracle at St. Winifred's well. Of this however, I shall have more to say by and by. I will only add that for the benefit of the converts, not only new publications but republications of old books are resorted to, of such a nature as cannot fail to con-

were to admit what yet, after all that we have seen of the errors of men confessedly learned,

vince any common understanding of what has so often been said, that, "the spirit of popery is still the same." See particularly a new edition of Ward's errata of the Protestant bible. More of the same sort of stuff is promised, nay, the impudent and exploded story of the nag's head is, it seems, to be revived; as I since find is actually the case in Dublin, in a pamphlet entitled, The controversy of ordinations truly stated, by the same Ward. Reprinted by Richard Coyne, 1807. I will add that on the alleged success of his endeavours Dr. Milner has grounded a call upon the well disposed of his communion for subscriptions to build a new chapel at Birmingham. Similar calls are made for similar buildings at Margate and Edinburgh. See Laity's Directory for 1808, sold by Keating and Co. Duke Street, Grosvenor Square. The reader also should be apprized that every popish priest in this country is considered as a missionary; at least I apprehend so: and in a late pastoral letter put forth by Dr. Milner it is given as a reason for its having been delayed, that he wished it should accompany a new and improved edition of the "OBSERVANDA, or rules for the con-"duct of English Missionaries, which rules," he adds, "are "usually distributed with the printed formulary of the faculties." p. xii. In the close of this pastoral letter, after repeatedly stating to his clergy that it is their bounden duty to reclaim their brethren who are in error, he presses it upon them that they should exert themselves to provide for a succession of their ministry; and he exclaims: "O let not that sacred cause fail in our hands, "through religious indifference, which our Catholic ancestors "and predecessors supported for so long a time with their blood!" Now, although after his repeated disclaimers, I do not mean to charge Dr. Milner with the consequences which may be fairly deduced from the above passage, I must be allowed to say that I have in my "Sequel" most incontrovertibly proved, out of the mouths of the Romanists themselves, that all the popish priests who suffered in the reign of Elizabeth and James, suffered not only for what was precisely declared by the laws of the land to be treason, but for actually holding tenets which Dr. Milner himself, if he be sincere,

in the first centuries, it were difficult to admit, that the free use of our reason will of itself preserve us from such corruptions; it should be recollected that this will not hold good with respect to what is called the unlearned, that is, much the most numerous body of Christians. They are wont, and not improperly, indeed almost necessarily, to take their faith very much upon the authority of others. It therefore would ill become us to discontinue any of the vigilance and activity employed by our predecessors in opposing a system of such danger to the souls of men; one which has been a snare not only to the vulgar and the foolish, but to the wise and the noble; still more to the scribes and disputers of the world.

must admit to be treasonable. I have, I say, proved this from the declarations and conduct of Stapleton, Cardinal Allen, and the others who had the rule and direction of the English Romanists in those days. I have done this without the slightest attempt at contradiction by Dr. Milner in his "Observations upon the Sequel," though this, being a main point at issue between us, was what he was particularly called upon to confute, and which if he could have accomplished it, would have done his cause more real good, than hundreds of such pages as he has stuffed with unmeaning scurrility. The reader who desires further satisfaction on this head may consult Preservatives against Popery, tit. xiii. p. 154, for Cardinal Allen's opinion at large. And also p. 149. The admission of Bzovius that there was none suffered in Elizabeth's time but those who taught *that the pope had power to depose kings*. See also ib. p. 156, the letter of Pope Pius V. encouraging the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland in their rebellion, and the epistle of the secular priests immediately following.

Indeed there could never have been any relaxation in this respect but for the extraordinary prevalence of that latitudinarian system which I pointed out in a former discourse, and which has of late been so extended as to include the Roman Catholics in the association and alliance, which, either tacitly or expressly, has been formed against the established church. Of the confusion of principle which has by this extraordinary and unnatural coalition been necessarily produced among the dissenters, I have before taken notice; but the inconsistency becomes tenfold more glaring, when this sort of union is considered as subsisting between Romanists and Protestants. For thus it happens that they whose leading principle it is to give the utmost possible scope to even the eccentricities of private judgment in religious concerns, scruple not to stipulate for the supposed rights and immunities of those who have never suffered individuals to exercise any judgment at all upon such matters. They who complain because, with every facility of following their own religious opinions, they are still liable to a few civil disadvantages in consequence of those opinions, are become the champions of a sect, which, wherever it has had the mastery, has never tolerated not only the worshipping of God, but not the thinking of him in any way but its own.

The ground upon which this union is justified, is as full of fallacy as the thing itself is extraordinary. We are referred to the weak and fallen state of the Romish church, and to the liberal sentiments of certain individuals belonging to her; by whom it is said the narrow and contracted spirit which she has formerly shewn, as well as the persecuting doctrines are disclaimed[4]. But the fact is that no dependence can be placed upon any result which may be drawn from the situation of that church, nor even from the language of ever so many of her members speaking individually: because the principles of her usurpations are interwoven with her very essence: because too it has been one of her maxims, avowed and acted upon, that dissimulation and submission to her enemies was allowed whenever she had not the

[4] The misfortune is that in order to attain this spirit of liberality, the Romanist is obliged to make such an effort as carries him beyond the mark, and transports him into the very regions of infidelity. This is notorious of all the Roman catholic writers in other countries who have become famous as having taken the lead in emancipating the world from what they call the slavery of priestcraft. And if the reader wishes to see more recent instances of it, he may consult "Sir John Throckmorton's Considerations, &c." or "the Remarks on the Bishop of Durham's Charge:" the former of which I have noticed in the "Sequel," and the latter in the "Reply to Dr. Milner's Obervations." I might mention also some late attempts of Dr. Geddes.

power to assert her superiority[5]; because lastly, according to her fundamental doctrines, no individual can speak with any authority of himself, nor can act upon his own private judgment. In fact, none of those Romanists who disclaim the most strongly the tenets in question, will admit distinctly that the popes or the councils by whom those tenets were promulgated, or by whom they were acted upon, did err. They cannot indeed make such an admission without shaking the foundations of their church, and destroying the ground upon which she builds her claim to dominion. The infallibility which she arrogates to herself being thus impeached in one instance, would by necessary consequence leave every man at liberty to judge for himself as to the whole of the controversy: which is what none of them will choose to admit of, or suppose to be lawful[6].

[5] See the graces or faculties granted to Parsons and Campion, in 1580. Foulis p. 435, or Lord Burleigh's tract of "Execution, "&c. not for Religion, but for Treason." Preservatives against Popery, tit. xiii. p. 171. or Appen. to "Sequel," p. xlviii. Bellarmine's position is well known that "Hæretici non sunt bello petendi quando sunt fortiores nobis." Bellarm. de Laicis. See this set forth at full in Hicks's tract of "Missionaries' arts discovered," printed in Preservatives against Popery, tit. xiii. 1.

[6] If there be any man who doubts of this I recommend to him Dr. Milner's late charge or pastoral letter before referred to. At p. iv. in a passage, part of which I have elsewhere quoted, he says, after inculcating the necessity of obedience to authority, "The

The truth is that intolerance is and must be the indelible character of that church; that it is interwoven with her very frame. The position so tenaciously maintained that out of her pale there is no salvation, constrains them, as it were, out of very charity, to use every means in their power to extirpate all whom they cannot reclaim; to persecute and put down all those whom they call heretics; and every page of their history will point out to them the horrible doctrine that all means are allowable for the

" Catholic church in particular, that most illustrious and perfect " of all societies, as being the work of infinite wisdom; that soci- " ety, *which like the ocean spreads its arms round the whole earth*, and " which unlike all human institutions, is neither to be dissolved by " external violence, nor internal decay; the church, I say, owes " all her beauty and stability to the *exact discipline and subordination* " which her divine founder has established in her, and in which he " has marshalled her, 'like an army drawn up in battle array.' " Cant. vi. 9. (It is v. 10 in our translation, and rendered, " terrible " as an army with banners." No matter, the quotation is not the less remarkable, as well as the comment which follows) " As in " a disciplined army the soldiers obey their officers, and these other " officers of superior rank, who themselves are subject to a com- " mander in chief: so in the *Catholic church extending as it does from* " *the rising to the setting sun*, the faithful of all nations are guided by " their pastors, who in their turns are submissive to the prelates, " whilst the whole body is subordinate to one supreme pastor, whose " *seat is the rallying point and centre of them all.* The Catholic, ac- " knowledging in the church a living, speaking authority as the " guide of his faith, *must submit his private opinions to its decisions,* " *otherwise he ceases to be a catholic.*" This is afterwards explained to extend to the minutest points of discipline, (p. x) and this under the express penalty of an ANATHEMA.

bringing about of so desirable an end. The very existence of such a tribunal as the inquisition, however mitigated its forms, and however in some countries, of late years it may have been subjected to the civil sovereign, is in itself a decisive proof of what I say. In all the countries where it is suffered to subsist, will it be pretended that a Protestant is permitted even to breathe, except by mere connivance? At Rome, in any part of Italy, in Spain, or in Portugal, will it be asserted that such a thing as a place of worship for members of the reformed church, except in the houses of foreign ministers, has ever been licensed or endured? Is it safe even now for a native inhabitant of any of those countries to profess opinions contrary to the bulls of the pope or the decrees of the council of Trent?[7]

[7] I need not bring any stronger proof of this than what appears in the very answer of the university of Salamanca to certain queries, &c. which was printed by the Roman Catholics themselves as a part of their case in 1805. The university after asserting that "Because they were catholics it is not necessary that they should "be acted by a persecuting spirit against those who are adverse "to their religion:" (which is indeed most true of the *real* catholic religion) and afterwards saying that "A distinction must be made "between the civil and religious toleration of heretics," make the following admission:—"In Spain indeed," (and this is the case in all countries where the inquisition subsists) "*for these three hun-*"*dred years past no one is permitted to hold any military office, nor to enjoy* "*a perpetual settlement, who is considered as an enemy to the catholic church,* "because our princes have thought it more eligible to forego cer-

The degree of ignorance produced by such a state of things may, indeed, well be conceived to be both inveterate and hopeless. In fact, the same causes continue to produce the same effects[s]. If, indeed, as it is said, or rather surmised, any improvements or modifications either

" tain advantages which might perhaps be derived from commercial " intercourse with men of different persuasions or from their im- " provement in the arts, than either to endanger the faith of their " subjects, or expose their empire to frequent broils and conten- " tions about the doctrines of religion." App. to Impart. Report of the Debates, &c. p. 28. This is exactly the " solitudinem fa- " ciunt, pacem appellant." And the reader will observe, that this is found in a document brought forward expressly in support of the claim which the Roman Catholics of this kingdom advance to what they call emancipation; that is, to be declared eligible to all civil and military offices whatsoever.

[s] I have been assured, from authority, upon which I have the fullest reliance, that, out of eight hundred emigrated priests, which were at one time at Winchester, not more than four individuals could *read* Greek, and not more than two out of those four could read the New Testament in the original so as to *understand* it. A very near relation of mine had a conversation with a Romish priest respecting our differences in religion, and the propriety of examining into them, upon which the priest gave this account of himself, that, having heard much of these things, and having, in consequence, a desire to know what was said on our side, he had obtained leave of his bishop to read controversial books, but that he had gained nothing by it; indeed, quite the contrary, for he found his judgment so completely bewildered, that he ended with being a confirmed sceptic. " J'ai fini par ne rien croire," were his words. Such is the consequence of a man being early impressed with principles fundamentally wrong; or, perhaps we may say in this case, having his temporal interest at variance with his better judgment.

in theory or in practice have taken place, we may safely assert, that the knowledge of them is, by their priests, confined entirely to their catechumens. They make no boast of it to the world. On the contrary, their language to us is, that they do not disclaim any one tenet of their church; they strictly maintain her infallibility, they assert that she is, as some of them have lately expressed themselves, "semper "eadem[9]."

This also, we know, that, in a part, at least, of this united kingdom, (and it has very lately been proved by woeful and bloody experience,) the blind subjection of the laity to the clergy is as absolute as ever it was, and as full of mischief to the bodies as well as to the souls of men[10].

[9] Dr. Troy and Mr. Charles Plowden.

[10] We must not wonder at this, if only a small part of their clergy hold the same language as Dr. Hussey did to his brethren of the diocese of Waterford, in the pastoral letter to which I have alluded. It abounds in the most inflammatory representations of the depressed state in which the Roman catholics had been kept: and, after mentioning that a great part of "these impolitic religious "penalties are removed," he adds, that "the rest of them are in a "state of progress to be totally removed. That, however a JUN-"TO for their own interested or other sinister views may raise "mobs to try to throw obstacles against the total repeal of them, "yet all their efforts must be useless. '*The vast rock is already de-*"*tached from the mountain's brow, and whoever opposes its descent and* "*removal must be crushed by his own rash endeavours.*'" The allusion to Matt. xxxi. 44, is evident, and shews very strikingly with what

That, under such circumstances, those sectaries who profess to be the most decided advocates for civil and religious liberty, who, on all occasions, express the greatest anxiety for the extension of knowledge of every sort, should make a common cause with that church, is only a proof that there is no length to which men may not be transported in the pursuit of a favourite object. It is what, in charity, I would rather leave to themselves to account for or excuse, than mark by any expressions of my own. One other observation only I will make, that, clearly, these two classes of separatists, in uniting with each other, cannot possibly have any thing in common, except their hostility to our establishment: they must tacitly, if not expressly agree to be silent upon every other particular, they cannot even hint to each other the grounds upon which they profess to stand. They can, indeed, I repeat it, have no one tenet, no one argument in common, but that they are both guilty of schism, that they have both unwarrantably separated from the communion of that church, to which (I speak, of course, of

confidence *some* of the papists, at least, in that kingdom, look to a complete re-establishment of their church with all the fulness of authority and power. This right reverend gentleman, however, as I understand, discovered, that on this and some other occasions, he had spoken rather too plain, and therefore withdrew himself to France, where he is since dead.

English and Irish Romanists,) they properly belong.

After what I have said in my former discourses, you will not wonder at my thus treating the members of that church, which falsely and impudently calls itself Catholic, at my considering them not merely as having caused the schism, which is one way of treating it, but as having themselves actually in their own persons, separated from their proper and rightful communion. Nothing, I must insist, can be more true. The schism, both formally and substantially, is all on their side [11].

The protestant dissenters, indeed, (and I might have alleged this also, as making their present alliance with the common adversary more monstrous,) are, or have been fond, as I before mentioned, of justifying their separation from us by the example of our predecessors. They say, that they have an equal right to separate from our church, as our church had to separate from the church of Rome. I have already stated, or rather hinted certain grounds, upon

11 "Upon which grounds I do not scruple to affirm the *Recu-*
"*sants* in England to be no less schismatics than any other separa-
"tists. They are, indeed, somewhat worse; for most others do
"only forbear communion, these do rudely condemn the church
"to which they owe obedience, yea, strive to destroy it; they are
"most desperate rebels against us." Barrow's "Discourse con-
"cerning the Unity of the Church," towards the end.

which it will appear, that the cases are very different; I affirm, now, that it is incumbent upon those who thus argue, to shew that our church requires such terms of communion as are actually sinful; because we and every protestant church do most positively declare and hold, and it will be my business, and is part of my professed design, to shew that this is most strongly the case with the church of Rome. This once shewn, it follows, of course, that, if the church of Rome had ever so much or so entirely been our church, if we had been born, indeed, within her pale and under her jurisdiction, still the terms of her communion being contrary to the true faith, and, of course, endangering our salvation, it would have been our duty to withdraw ourselves from her fellowship, to break off her yoke from our necks. The fact is, however, that it cannot, with any shew of reason, be pretended that the Roman pontiff ever had a right to exercise any sort of jurisdiction in this kingdom, that he was the head, or in any way the governor of this church. At the reformation, therefore, the church of England did only reassert that independence which belonged to her in the beginning, and which, neither to her nor to any national church can be denied. Again, in recognizing the king of this realm for her head, as supreme in ecclesiastical as well as temporal causes, she only followed the example

of the primitive church, which, from the moment that it pleased God to give her Christian emperors, submitted herself to their authority, and owned them for her sovereigns. And this lasted for several centuries, without any pretence to the contrary advanced by any one pope[11].

There will appear no doubt of this, if we take ever so cursory a survey of what was the practice of the first ages, in which we shall find the absolute independency of bishops established in the first instance, and afterwards only limited by their being made subject to the superintendence of patriarchs or metropolitans within their several provinces, and to the emperor as the head of all. Their independency was so absolute at the beginning, that it extended to all matters whatever, relating to the internal economy of the church, to rites and ceremonies, to the form of prayer which was used, nay, to the particular terms of the creeds, with all that was necessary in order to enforce and to preserve uniformity[12]. According to the practice then

[11] See the proofs of this most amply detailed in Barrow's Treatise on the Supremacy of the Pope. Supposition vi.

[12] See for this, Bingham, B. ii. C. 6. § 2 and 3. There is a remarkable passage to this effect, from Austin, there cited, where Casulanus is exhorted to submit, in all indifferent matters, to those who were the rulers of the church where he was. "Si concilio "meo acquiescis, episcopo tuo in hâc re noli resistere et quod facit "ipse sine ullo scrupulo vel disceptatione sectare." Aust. Epist.

pursued and approved by all the orthodox, every Christian was bound to join in communion with the particular church within whose limits he was resident, and to conform to all her ordinances, under the penalty of being considered as a schismatic.

Such was the state of every church within herself, and such her constitution with respect to individual members. As far as this goes, therefore, it is clear that the church of England was fully authorized in the claims which she made for herself at the reformation, and in the manner in which she established and gave effect to those claims.

But I admit, that there was also another and a larger sort of communion, according to which all the churches were bound in close fellowship with each other, and constant correspondence was kept up between them. Indeed, this was a consequence of that unity which our Lord commanded to be observed between all his disciples; so that the several particular churches, however, almost of necessity, having separate and independent rites and customs, yet agreeing

ad Casulanum. Vol. ii. p. 52. Ed. Bened. The question was about fasting on a Sunday or not, and he cites the advice given to himself when young, by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, that, for avoiding offence, he should follow the custom of every church to which he came. "Ad quamcunque ecclesiam veneritis, ejus morem servate "si scandalum pati non vultis aut facere." Ib. pp. 61, 62.

in all essential and fundamental points made up the one catholic church of Christ. It may also be well conceived, how desirable, and of what importance it must have been to keep up such a union and correspondence in those days of persecution, when, as well the governors as the individual members of the several churches had such pressing need of advice and consolation and support under the tribulations and dangers to which they were almost daily exposed. It followed also from this sort of connexion that every bishop, although only ruling his own church, had a concern, and felt an interest in seeing that those articles of faith, by the consenting in which the connexion was kept up, and made to answer its proper end, should be preserved pure and inviolate; and this gave him a warrant to interpose, with his advice and remonstrance, whenever, in any of the churches, he perceived a disposition to run into heresy, and to corrupt the genuine doctrines of the gospel. And this was the sort, and the only sort of interference, which, in the beginning, was allowed to any bishop, whether the bishop of Rome, or any other, in common with his fellows. The dignity of that see, indeed, owing to the opulence and extent of the metropolis to which it belonged, might give a particular weight to his opinion, but still he was only considered as a simple individual, among many who

were his equals [24]. Nor did this or any other circumstance give to him more than to any other

[24] There is a remarkable instance of this interference in one of Cyprian's Epistles (the lviith) where the bishop of Carthage applies to his brother bishop of Rome, on account of Marcian, bishop of Arles, who had joined himself to Novatian, and so was guilty of schism and heresy; in which case, it, as he says, belonged to them upon whom the government of the church was rested, to interfere and take order. "Cui rei nostrum est consulere et subvenire, frater "carissime, qui divinam clementiam cogitantes, et guberuandæ "Ecclesiæ libram tenentes, sic censuram vigoris peccatoribus ex- "hibemus," &c. And he says, lower down, that, on that account it was, that so many bishops were joined together, in order, that if one of their body should fall into heresy, or destroy the flock, the others should come in, like diligent and charitable shepherds, and keep together the scattered sheep of Christ. "Ideirco enim, fra- "ter carissime, *copiosum* corpus est sacerdotum concordiæ glutino "atque unitatis vinculo copulatum, ut si quis ex collegio nostro "hæresin facere et gregem Christi lacerare et vastare tentaverit, sub- "veniant cæteri, et quasi pastores utiles et misericordes oves domi- "nicas in gregem colligant." And he illustrates this by two instances; as that in the case of a haven becoming insecure, or a house on the road being infested with robbers, how desirable it must be for the ship to have a better port, which it might put into, and the traveller to have another inn more safe, where he might be lodged without danger. Again, he urges, that, although there are many shepherds, yet there is but one flock. "Etsi multi pastores "sumus unum gregem pascimus." In consequence, he presses him to write letters into the province, and to the people at Arles, in order that Marcian may be deposed, and another placed in his stead. Baluze, in his notes on this passage truly observes, from Cicero, that, where there is room for conjecture, ingenious men will think very differently, according to their prepossessions. And, so he says it has happened here. For, the Romanists urge this place as shewing that Stephen was referred to as head of the church, and as having power to excommunicate or depose any bishop, and Baronius boldly asserts, that, neither the bishops nor the people at

bishop, a power to repress disorder in any diocese but his own. He might admonish, reprove, or exhort, but the judgment upon such matters, when it became necessary to pass any such judgment, was reserved to the assembly of all the bishops, whether of the province, of the nation, or of the empire; all which assemblies obtained the name of synods or councils.

Of these synods or councils, there is little or no mention in the two first ages of the church. We have, indeed, in the Acts of the Aposfles, an account of that which is generally considered as the first council, and which may well have served as a model to those which were afterwards holden. It was not, indeed, till the fourth century that we find any instance of what is called a general or œcumenical council. The reason of this is apparent. Until the churches could be

Arles could get rid of this heretical pastor, without his permission. On the other hand, the protestants see in this letter a perfect equality between the bishops of Carthage and Rome; and Fell retorts the argument upon the papists, saying, that by the same rule, that the bishop of Rome's writing to the people at Arles argues a superiority in him over them, Cyprian, by his writing to Stephen must be considered as Stephen's superior. Baluze, of course, concludes for the pope; but any man who reads the letter attentively, and without prejudice, will see in this a plain proof, among so many others, of what Bingham calls the "independency of the Cyprianic age." No other power is pre-supposed in Stephen than what is exercised by Cyprian towards him, that of exhorting and persuading the people at Arles to do their duty, which, also, in this case, both from the local situation of Rome, and for the reason given in the next note was most properly incumbent on Stephen.

fully secured from persecution, until the time came when the sovereigns of the empire, having adopted christianity for their religion, became its protectors and guardians, it would not have been wise, and hardly practicable for the bishops and fathers of the church to assemble together in any great numbers, nor for the individuals to leave their flocks upon any distant mission. Of a general council publicity seems to be the very essence; but before the days of Constantine, it was often necessary for the disciples to conceal themselves, in order to elude the rage of their enemies, nor could they at any time have been so certain of the continuance of peace, as to be able to concert beforehand, and carry into execution, the arrangements which might be necessary to such a meeting. All therefore that could be done was, for such bishops as were near to each other, to assemble, according to the exigency, in the several districts or provinces which were most infested with such heresies as it was necessary to put down and to condemn. What was decided in these provincial or lesser councils was naturally sent to the churches in other parts for their concurrence: as it is evident that such decisions could have weight only in proportion to the numbers which approved of and concurred in them: there not being then, as strictly speaking there could not be any authority by which

they could be made binding upon persons or churches which were not parties or consenting to their enactment. This is what took place more particularly in the controversy respecting the time of celebrating Easter, when, not only separate councils were held in different provinces which communicated with each other, but the sentiments of the other churches which had no part in those councils, were also taken. Such, also, was the mode adopted by that council of Antioch which deposed Paul of Samosata, and which gave account of its proceedings by a synodel letter to all the absent bishops, and more particularly to those of the two other great sees, the bishops of Rome and of Alexandria.

In all this, clearly, there is nothing like what can be properly called jurisdiction in one church or bishop over another: nothing but what I have stated, that when any evils were to be resisted, or any point of doctrine or of discipline to be ascertained, those bishops who could do so, met together and declared their sentiments. Those sentiments were communicated to the other churches, and were adopted and observed according to their apparent reasonableness, and the weight of character which belonged to those from whom they came. Nothing was pretended to but that general and mutual superintendance over each other which is exercised by all bodies

which are united and co-operating together in any common cause. If in the case of Paul of Samosata, the sentence was accompanied with deprivation, we must recollect that the council was held at Antioch itself, in the very city of which he was bishop, and must have been so held with the consent of the clergy and people, as well as of the bishops who composed it; that is, in fact, of all those whose concurrence could be required in any election to the see, and in whom or some of whom, must have resided the power of removing individuals who should have so corrupted the doctrine as to be unfit any longer to preside over the church.

Still the different churches continued independent of each other and equal in authority. It was only after the civil and ecclesiastical government of the empire became united in one head, that the same sort of subordination was established in both cases; and patriarchs and metropolitans were set over the bishops in particular districts, in the same manner as the exarchs and prefects had the civil rule over their respective provinces. But even then the patriarchs and metropolitans, however they might govern those who were placed under them, retained their independence in respect of one another. And how much all this was connected with the civil establishment will appear from what happened in the case of Constanti-

nople; which city having been greatly increased and raised into consequence by becoming the residence of the emperors, it was upon that very account declared in one of the general councils that it should rank with the three other great sees, those of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, which had been considered as enjoying a pre-eminence of dignity over the others. And the very reasons which had given weight and importance to Rome were alleged for putting Constantinople upon an equal footing: that is, the extent and the opulence and the civil rank of the one as of the other: the "amplitudo urbis;" their being both imperial cities: and Constantinople is expressly styled on that account, "nova Roma," and "junior Roma," a "new" or a "younger Rome[15]."

[15] 1st council of Constantinople, (2d general council) can. 3. So council of Chalcedon, (3d general council) can. 28. v. Barrow's treatise, p. 159. Cyprian recognizes this precedence in Rome, and for this very reason "Quoniam pro magnitudine sua debeat "Carthaginem Roma precedere." Ep. 49. As to any other primacy, or precedency, or real authority, or actual jurisdiction, it is completely negatived by all the saints in the Romish calendar of that age; by Austin and Jerome as well as by Cyprian. Not to fatigue the reader with unnecessarily heaping quotations, it may suffice generally to refer him to Barrow who in his treatise on the Supremacy of the Pope, as well as in his Discourse on the Unity of the Church, has brought together (as was his manner) even a superabundant quantity of such authorities. Dr. Milner in his late work, (Inquiry, p. 163) relies on a passage from Irenæus contra Hæreses, lib. iii. § 3. where it is said that "ad hanc ecclesiam (meaning Rome)

During all this time the emperors were exercising their supremacy over the church, and were addressed by the popes themselves as their sovereigns. It was in virtue of the imperial mandate that those general councils to which we are in the habit of appealing, were convened; it was also by the operation of the imperial authority that their decrees were enforced; that they came to be considered as obligatory upon all, and as possessing the character of doctrines established by law[16].

Now, in the first place, if we consider this state of things, is it not clear that, even admitting what can by no means be admitted, that any jurisdiction was exercised by the bishop of

" propter potiorem principalitatem necessæ est omnem convenire " ecclesiam." The reader will recollect that we have not Irenæus's own words, and that in a case like this every thing depends on the precise expression. However, I apprehend that which ever way taken it can mean no more than what Cyprian has said in the above passage. See Grabe's note on this text, who cites a passage of Gregory Nazianzen saying almost literally the same thing of Constantinople two centuries after: and, observe, this quotation from Gregory, the later popish editor, who professes to answer Grabe, passes over in perfect silence. Greg. Nazianzen, Vol. i. p. 517. " Εις ἣν " (that is Constantinople) " πανταχοθεν ακρα συνερεχει, " και ὁθεν αρχεται ὡσπερ εμπορια κοινη της πιστεως" "To which " the people from the farthest parts of the world run together, and " from whence, as from a common emporium of the faith, they " take their rise (or direction)."

[16] See this completely shewn in Barrow's treatise, under the head Supposition vi. p. 185, and seq.

Rome beyond his own provinces, or over the church at large, still it could be no argument for his having a right to exercise any such jurisdiction in these realms at this moment? or, in fact, at the time when Austin the monk, landed upon these shores[17]? For, what was then meant by the whole world, was, in truth, nothing more than the Roman empire: the "ἡ οικουμενη" the very term from which councils are called œcumenical, had notoriously no wider meaning[18]. The emperors therefore might have conferred on the bishop of their capital city the ecclesiastical dignity and power of a metropolitan over what was then called the whole world; and the pope might then have become, in respect

[17] The first fruits of which were, let it be remembered, the slaughtering of twelve hundred very venerable and harmless monks, for refusing to acknowledge the authority of the pope. See Wilkins's Concilia, Vol i. p. 28, and what is said there and in the preceding pages of these monks and of the British church.

[18] In St. Luke c. ii. v. 1, it is rendered by our translators, "the "whole world," but evidently could only mean the Roman empire. Even as to these general or œcumenical councils, Barrow says, "They do shew rather the unity of the empire than of the church; "or of the church as national under one empire, than as catholic; "for it was the state which did call and moderate them to its pur- "poses." He further observes, that, "It is not expedient that "there should be any such now that christendom standeth divided "under divers temporal sovereignties, for their resolutions may in- "trench on the interests of some princes, and can hardly accom- "modate themselves to the laws and customs of every state. Discourse concerning the Unity of the Church, p. 321, vol. ii. of Works.

of the wide extended dominions of that vast empire, what our primate is within the more confined limits of this realm. Whether this did happen or not I am not now inquiring; and most assuredly whatever of that sort did take place is of a later date than the seventh century. But, however that might be, this consequence would follow, when afterwards the empire was dismembered and broken into several distinct and independent kingdoms, that wherever the supreme civil government was lodged, thither also the supremacy in ecclesiastical matters would follow. This was what must have happened, what did in fact most decidedly happen, with respect to this country, divided as it was by the sea, and never having had more than a very imperfect communication with the rest of the empire[19]. This is what we see to have actually taken place in the Greek church; the patriarch of Constantinople having always both claimed and in the end preserved his independence, in spite of the repeated efforts which have been made by the see of Rome to bring him into subjection. Indeed the right which was in later times assumed by the popes

[19] "Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos." Virg. Ecl. 1. That in fact the bishop of Rome never had any jurisdiction over the British church, even when the country was subject to the Roman emperors, is shewn by Bingham, Book ix. c. 1. § 11 and 12, which see, and the authors there cited.

of convening general councils, never was admitted or even thought of, as long as there existed any emperor who could exercise that power. When the dismemberment of the empire took place, the princes who ruled the several states of which it had been composed, were easily brought to let that function be exercised by an ecclesiastical person rather than by one of their own description: for had it been lodged in such a one it might naturally have been alleged as a proof of his supremacy over other temporal potentates, as if he had succeeded to all the rights of the emperors: but who could suspect that such would be the consequence of entrusting it with a mere ecclesiastic? Who could have dreamed, (and indeed this of itself proves that no such idea was entertained) who could have dreamed, I say, that a pretension would thus be raised of a pre-eminence and power so new and unheard of; which, disclaiming the use of temporal means, should yet rule over temporal princes and dispose of their worldly concerns with the most absolute sway?

Thus in truth it will appear that there is no foundation in history for supposing that any such power was in the beginning conferred upon the Roman pontiff. In the three first centuries he was a simple bishop, and no more. When afterwards he was declared to be one of

four patriarchs to whom a particular rank and jurisdiction were allotted, and in that character he had a certain number of churches placed under his superintendence[20]; still his authority was circumscribed to them only, and beyond their limits he was not allowed to have any sort of command or rule. Those very individuals among the fathers whose words are cited by the Romanists as acknowledging him to be the successor of St. Peter, are most express and explicit in asserting the equal authority of all bishops and their independence on one another[21]. So

[20] They were called the suburbicarian churches; what they were see in Bingham, Book ix. c. 1, § 9 & 10. This jurisdiction was either simply co-extensive with that of the *præfectus urbis*, that is, extending to a hundred miles round Rome; or at most extended to the ten provinces which were subjected to the *vicarius urbis*. Whatever they were, the Nicene council (can. 6.) having particularised them as being under the care and government of the Roman bishop, and assigning the same jurisdiction to the bishop of Alexandria over the Egyptian churches, expressly negatives the pretended claims of the popes in later times.

[21] This is most remarkably shewn in that passage of Cyprian, "De unitate ecclesiæ," which the Romanists rely so mainly upon. For there in the course of his argument for unity, after reasoning upon our Saviour's words in Matthew xvi. respecting building the church upon Peter, (as he construes it) and the commandment in John xxi. to "feed the sheep," he goes on with most remarkable assertions of the equality of the other apostles. "Quamvis apostolis "omnibus tribuat et dicat sicut misit me pater &c. tamen ut uni-"tatem manifestaret, unitatis ejusdem originem ab uno incipientem "suâ auctoritate disposuit." As to this notion, harped upon by other doctors also, of one being thus preferred for the sake of unity,

the most gross of the abuses which grew out of this usurpation, or were adopted and established in pursuance of it; because it will be seen that the great corruptions which at the time of the reformation were universally complained of, were, in fact, occasioned by the ambition and avarice of the popes; and introduced by them as means by which wealth might be accumulated or power extended. Above all that diabolical spirit of persecution by which all inquiry was to be stopped, was and could have been nourished only by the consciousness which must have been felt that the foundations upon which these encroachments were built were rotten and unsound. What was obtained by injustice and deceit, could only be secured by violence. And it was only by forcibly shutting the eyes of men that delusions so gross could be prolonged.

It will not be expected of me that I should refute at length pretensions which have of late years hardly excited any other feeling than that of contempt, except in those who were in some way or other parties to the fraud. Yet as attempts have lately been made to restore them to some degree of credit, as in fact they continue still to have an existence, though in a more limited sphere, it may not be right to pass them over wholly without notice. And as the first and greatest abuse, as that which indeed is the foundation of all others, is the per-

version of the holy scriptures; as it is that which above all others tends to obscure the light, I shall in the first place endeavour to draw your attention to that, and shortly examine those texts which are supposed to be favourable to the claims of the Roman pontiff, and under colour of which he assumes to be not only the first among bishops, but indeed the only bishop. For, since the decrees of the council of Trent, his dominion over his brother bishops is carried to such a height and so confirmed, that in truth they are become little better than his vicars. They swear obedience to him in as strong terms as any subject can use towards a sovereign; and even oblige themselves to appear in person before him every three years; or to excuse themselves by a sufficient deputy. With such care is this vassalage enforced.

You can hardly be ignorant that these pretensions of the pope are founded upon the assumption, first, that our Lord conferred on Peter not only a pre-eminence or priority in rank, but a jurisdiction and command over his brethren the apostles. Next, that this was not merely personal to St. Peter, but that it was intended to devolve upon his successors, and of his successors upon the bishop of Rome in particular. I pass by the questions which have been raised, not without reason, as to whether

St. Peter ever was at Rome and whether he died there; because those facts have been generally admitted, and the admission of them will but little forward the cause of our adversaries. But it is not to be forgotten that those who assert St. Peter to have been bishop of Rome, also admit, that previous to that he was bishop of Antioch, and also of Alexandria: because, if one were disposed to yield to them every other point, it would still remain a question why the bishop of Rome should be the successor of St. Peter, rather than the bishop of Antioch or the bishop of Alexandria. There are indeed strong reasons why Antioch should have the preference, why that should be considered as "the mother and mistress of all "churches," since it was there that the disciples were first called Christians: and the Romanists themselves have a festival which is instituted in honour of St. Peter's chair at Antioch. As to Antioch too, there is none to dispute the point with him, whereas undoubtedly those persons who look only into the holy Scriptures, will be apt to consider St. Paul as having much the greater right to claim the church of Rome as being his peculiar. Indeed it is hard to say how the contrary can be maintained; for modern Rome is certainly a gentile church; and the Romanists themselves being fain to allow what was done by St. Paul at Rome, only de-

fend themselves from the proof which this supplies against their cause, by saying that St. Peter and he were bishops together, St. Paul being bishop of the Jews, and St. Paul bishop of the gentiles; and indeed they do for that reason join them together as being both patrons of their church. But here again Scripture is against them, for it is most evident that St. Paul's epistle to the Romans is addressed particularly to the Jews; more so than to the gentiles. So that they in fact make of St. Peter an interloper: they represent him as doing that which St. Paul most pointedly disclaims as improper, "building upon another man's foun-"dation*." The truth is, however, that neither St. Peter nor St. Paul were in a strict sense bishops of that or of any other see. They were superintendents of a higher class, and while they instituted resident bishops and elders, they themselves travelled from place to place, in order to extend as far as they could to the very last the bounds of their master's kingdom†.

Without dwelling any longer upon these and many other points which might stop us in the outset, let us come to the texts in question.

Their first and most noted is that where our Lord, having asked his disciples, "Whom say

* Rom. xv. 20.

† See as to this Barrow's Treatise, Supposition iii. p. 82, and seq.

" ye that I am," and Peter having answered, " Thou art the Christ, the son of the living " God," our Lord in reply said, " Blessed art " thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath " not revealed this unto thee, but my Father " which is in Heaven. And I say unto thee, " thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will " build my church, and the gates of hell shall " not prevail against it." He added further, " I will give unto thee the keys of heaven, " and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth " shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever " thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in " heaven." Now were we to consider this passage by itself, without adverting at all to what is its proper comment, the subsequent conduct of Peter and the other apostles, yet even then it would be difficult to contend that our Lord's saying was to be applied exclusively to St. Peter. For the question which led to that, was put to all the apostles, and Peter when he answered it, must, according to fair construction, be considered as answering in the name of all[22]. There is nothing particular to

[22] " Petrus, super quem ædificata ab eodem domino fuerat ecclesia " unus pro omnibus loquens et ecclesiæ vice respondens." Cyp. Ep. 55. What this building of the church was, the same father, in addition to former passages cited, explains very clearly, when quoting this very passage, he deduces from it the ordination of bishops and the course of the church according to which it should in all its acts be governed by them as set over it. "Dominus noster episcopi

St. Peter, but that he is addressed by name and that to his name our Lord makes an immediate allusion. But the power of binding and of loosing which is thus declared to belong to St. Peter, we find, according to the same evangelist and to St. John, afterwards expressly conferred by our Lord upon all the apostles. As to the keys having been given to him, that is properly referred to his having been the first who preached the gospel not only to the Jews but to the Gentiles; and who thus had the privilege of opening the kingdom of Heaven to both descriptions of Christians. As to what is meant by the words, "upon this rock," which the Romanists interpret as making Peter the head of the church; it may be sufficient to say that very few indeed of the fathers interpret it as applying to Peter. Some say that Christ means it of himself: others and much the greater part apply it to the profession of faith

" honorem et ecclesiæ suæ rationem disponens in evangelio loquitur " et dicit Petro. Ego tibi dico, &c. Inde per temporum et suc- " cessionum vices episcoporum et ecclesiæ decurrit ut ecclesia su- " per episcopos constituatur, et omnis actus ecclesiæ per eodem " præpositos gubernetur." From these words spoken to Peter, he infers not a jurisdiction exclusively given to Peter and his successors, but a government resting upon all bishops equally. Austin's words upon this are, " Cui ecclesiæ figuram gerenti dixit dominus " super hanc," &c. Ep. 53. Ed. Bened. Jerome's words are, " Pe- " tris personâ omnium apostolorum profitetur." Comment. in loc. And afterwards when speaking of giving the keys he applies it not at all to Peter, but to the bishops and priests in general.

which the apostle had thus made. And this is the opinion generally adopted and most approved. I will add further that were it ever so erroneous, still as against the Romanists it would be conclusive: first, because of the authority which they give to the fathers, being indeed in their ideas equal to that of Scripture, and which therefore makes this interpretation binding upon them: secondly, because it proves most decidedly that at the time when the fathers wrote, that is, for four or five centuries after Christ, no such doctrine as this of the supremacy of St. Peter was known in the church. If that be not sufficient we can allege one of their popes themselves who interprets the passage in that sense. "Super istâ confessione ædificabo ecclesiam "meam[23]." So notoriously modern as well as false is the sense which they put upon these words, as well as the doctrine which they would build upon them. But supposing Peter to be the "rock," yet even then it would prove nothing, for, as it is argued by a learned man of their own communion, if Peter was a foundation stone, "lapis fundamenti[24]," all the apostles

[23] Felix iii. Epis. 31. apud Binnium. See Barrow's Treatise, p. 60. This was the case also with Nicholas i. Epis. 2, 6, and John viii. Ep. 76.

[24] Cardinal Cusa in his Treatise de Catholicâ Concordiâ, lib. ii. c. 18. Richer, Launoy, and Du Pin, as well as, I believe, many other Romanists, have maintained the same doctrine, even in later

were equally "foundation stones." It is expressly said, that "the church was built upon "the foundation of the apostles, Christ himself "being the chief corner stone:" and indeed all the fathers in their comments upon these passages are careful to observe that nothing more was given to Peter than to the rest of the apostles[*].

The other passage on which the advocates of the popes chiefly rely, is that where our Lord after his resurrection bids Peter "feed his "lambs," and "feed his sheep*." In this also you see that nothing more is enjoined than what was and is the duty not only of apostles and bishops, but of elders. The latter are by St. Paul in the same terms exhorted to "take heed "to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had "made them overseers, and to feed the church "of God†." But further, we have here again the authority of the fathers, conclusive, I must

days. Cardinal Cusa's words are so full that I have set them down at the end in Note E.

[*] I have noticed this particularly in Cyprian, because he is so constantly alleged by the papists as their great authority; but Austin and Jerome, and all the old fathers speak the same language. I will only add one more observation; that our Lord does not say to Peter *by* thee I will *rule* my church, but *upon* thee, that is, upon thy preaching or confession, I will *build* it. See, besides the authors already cited, Whitby in loc.

* John xxi. † Acts xx.

remind you, as against the Romanists, who all in their comments upon this passage agree that it conveys no authority; who on the contrary set it in its true and beautiful light. According to them, the reason of our Saviour's thus distinguishing Peter was to console him under the sense of that apostacy of which he had been guilty in denying his master; and as he had denied him thrice, so our Lord's address to him is repeated thrice: thus pointing out the way by which he might recover all that he had forfeited*.

Upon so weak and unreal a foundation stands the claim of the popes in its very first step. So little do even the texts which they themselves adduce speak for them. But, indeed, if they had really contained any thing which by fair inference might be construed to give a superiority to St. Peter, this is so guarded against by

* I can't help observing how much Peter was sobered, if I may use the expression, by having thus fallen into sin. His language before was, "Though *all these* should forsake thee, yet will not I "forsake thee." New though the opportunity is so plainly given him by our Lord's saying, "Lovest thou me *more* than *these*?" Yet we find no repetition of this overweening confidence. His answer is modest and humble: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." A little of this modesty in his pretended successors would have become them well, and done the church good service; at least have kept it from a great deal of trouble. Indeed where is there in any discourse of Peter's, where is there in either of his epistles, the least intimation of his having any superiority over his brethren?

the whole tenour of scripture, that it could never with any shew of reason have been ultimately maintained. After our Saviour had made his supposed delegation of authority to that apostle, it pleased God that the disciples should contend among themselves who should be greatest. Had our Lord had any such intention as the Romanists attribute to him, would he not then have expressed it? Would he not have said, "Why "this contention among yourselves? Have I "not already declared that Peter shall be the "head, that it is he that has the keys and who "shall rule over you?" So far from this he declares himself in the plainest terms against every idea of there being any such superiority in any of them. Again, when the two sons of Zebedee asked the two first places in his kingdom, does he then give a hint that it is Peter to whom the chief honour is due, and who is to preside over the rest? But it pleased God further that in other instances also the equality which subsisted between the apostles should be put beyond all doubt; that not only St. James should deliver the judgment of a council where Peter was present; that Peter should be deputed to particular missions as other apostles were; but that he should fall into error, and be reproved for it by Paul, by one who calls himself the least of the apostles; who yet maintains his

right, not to be behind either Peter or any of his brethren, and who ruled the churches which he had founded, and, we may presume, Rome among the rest, with absolute and perfectly independent authority.

I need not weary you with saying more on the subject; nor need I add a word as to the other points, for if there had been any pre-eminency in Peter, surely it must have been all personal, it could have had nothing to do with his successor, if any such could have been found or ascertained, which I have sufficiently shewn not to be the case[n].

I know not neither, if I ought to notice two other of their doctrines, which they call in aid, and according to which they hold the necessity of an infallible judge to decide controversies, and the visibility of the church. Both which advantages, they assert, are to be found in their church and in no other. In support of this, they allege certain texts of St. Matthew, in which our Saviour speaks of his apostles as being "the

[n] The character of Peter, as compared to those of the other apostles, is very natural, and according to what we may see almost daily. Take any twelve men acting together, in any matter whatever, of business or of pleasure, there will always be some one, who, from having greater eagerness or activity of mind, or pretending to greater skill, will put himself more forward than the others; and this will be permitted by the rest, either through indolence, or for the sake of convenience, without their allowing him to have, in fact, any degree of power over them.

"light of the world*," and tells them that "a "city set upon a hill cannot be hid." In the other passage he bids the disciples, in case of their having any dispute, "tell it to the "church†." In the first of these it is clear that our Lord is only exhorting his apostles to be diligent in propagating his gospel. It is as clear, that, in the latter, he is speaking of contests about temporal concerns, which he would not have us pursue with too great earnestness. As to the fact of the Romish church having always been on such an eminence that she could at all times be resorted to, and known as the true one; that is, as weak as the rest of their pretences. During the persecution under Diocletian, the church at large was so oppressed that her very existence could hardly be ascertained. And, at a subsequent period, the whole church of Rome, with the pope at their head, were Arians. It has been well asked, where was to be found, at those periods, the boasted splendour and the orthodoxy of that church, with all her visible graces[a]?

* Matt. v. 14. † Matt. xviii. 17.

[a] There was a time in the Jewish church, when the Scriptures were not to be found, or had not for many years been opened. See 2 Kings xxii. Does not this bear some analogy to the state of this Christian church under the popes in the dark ages? Yet, both the Jewish and the Christian church survived these their respective eras of desolation. It has also been asked, what became of this visibility

The same question would apply to the claim of infallibility. But, indeed, we might first desire our adversaries to define with whom this infallibility resides, with popes or with councils? separate or united? For, upon this point, there is, and has been, an endless diversity of opinion. We might ask them further, how such a supposition is reconcileable with their many and notorious schisms, their disputed elections, their popes and anti-popes, as to most of whom it is to this day matter of uncertainty which was the true, and which the false pretender to infallibility[19]? As to the texts which they adduce, of

as well as infallibility of the Romish church during the many schisms by which she was torn, one set of popes excommunicating the other, particularly that long period alluded to in the text, when one pretender to the government of this same infallible church was at Rome, and the other at Avignon, which lasted for half a century. Of these schisms, thirty are reckoned up. See Stillingfleet on Idolatry, c. 5, § 6, and Preserv. against Popery, tit. i. p. 6.

[19] There is no man who has opened a book on the subject, but must have observed how hard the Romanists are driven, when called upon to point out where this infallibility resides. Some say in popes, some in councils, and some in popes and councils uniting together. We are now told by an Irish archbishop of that communion, that, when a council is not sitting, it resides in the pope, but that the infallibility is not ascertained until the doctrine or constitution promulgated has been acquiesced in by a majority of the bishops of the church. What time is allowed for this acquiescence, or how long the infallibility continues *in abeyance* after the promulgation of the constitution we are not told. One thing we know, that the bishops profess themselves to be the subjects of the pope, and take an oath at their consecration to observe all his

the promises of our Saviour, that "he will be "with us to the end of the world," and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against his "church," Any man must see that these are only general assurances, and that they hold out only final success.

Without further descanting upon them, I will, therefore, confine myself to stating briefly what I conceive to be the doctrine of protestants upon those subjects.

We do then most firmly believe that Christ will be with his church to the end of the world; that, under whatever cloud he may suffer the light at any time to be obscured, whether through the malice of outward enemies or the corruptions of Christians themselves, it will always, in due season, break forth, it will, sooner or later, enlighten the world far and near. In particular, we acknowledge it to be an effect of that gracious Providence which thus watches over the faithful, that we have been enabled to free ourselves from the shackles which had been imposed upon us by the church of Rome, and from the corruptions and abominations with which

constitutions. So, what choice they can have, or what judgment is left them to exercise, may, indeed, puzzle any common man to determine. See more of this in the "Reply to the Observations of "Dr. Milner," p. 55, and Dr. Troy's Pastoral Letter, 1793, p. 73, and 76. This was the opinion of Butler also, a late titular archbishop of Ireland. See his "Lives of the Saints." Part iv. p. 369.

we had been contaminated in the course of our communion with her bishops.

We also believe, that there has always been a church of Christ existing and visible upon earth, though not always easy to be distinguished. Nay, we allow that church to have existed even under the papacy; for, as it has been truly said, a man infected with a leprosy, is still a man; our church, therefore, was always subsisting, even in the dark ages, though diseased. God gave us grace at length to shake off the diseases with which we had thus been infected; we rid ourselves at the reformation of our many heresies, the most pestilent of which, because it was the source of all the others, was this supremacy of the popes. Thus the English church is, and has continued essentially the same, from the first conversion of the Britons to Christianity down to the present hour. She has, indeed, suffered from within and without, she has stood many an assault, and been greatly impaired at times, both in strength and beauty; but, blessed be God, she survives, and is, according to my firm and conscientious belief, the truest model of an apostolical church now existing, as near to perfection, in her theory at least, as, perhaps, any church made up of fallible men can hope to be, while we continue in this world.

I have now, I trust, shewn with sufficient clearness, though briefly, that the claims of the

popes have no foundation, either in Scripture or in the practice of antiquity. I have shewn also, upon how different a footing stands the question between us and the papists from what it does between us and the protestant dissenters. For, according to what I have thus laid before you, as well from the practice of all antiquity, as from Scripture, and I may add, (for, indeed, all the works of God harmonize together,) from the nature of the thing, that we, as forming no part of the national church of Rome could not be bound to pay any obedience to that see, nor to govern ourselves by her decrees. We could only be connected with her in that common bond of charity and of fellowship which should join together all the churches of Christ; and which will always subsist, where it is not broken by any fundamental errors in doctrine, or by extravagant and inadmissible claims of superiority or of independence on the one part or on the other.

But, as to the body of English dissenters, they, as born within her bosom, are, or should be, according to the same usage of antiquity, language of Scripture, and nature of the thing, members of our church; and as such, are bound to conform to her discipline. This, indeed, neither they nor any other individuals are bound to do to every extent; for, as I have before admitted, they may shew, if such were the case,

that the terms of communion which she requires are contrary to God's word, and that they cannot continue in conformity to her without endangering their eternal salvation. Certainly, a case of that kind, properly made out, would be a sufficient excuse and ground of separation. But, this is what has never been made out; no, nor ever pretended by the greater part of the dissenters. They have, therefore, been obliged to recur to such principles as I have before shewn to militate not only against all ecclesiastical discipline, but against the very words of Scripture.

On the other hand, and in the second place, we are prepared to shew that the church of Rome did, and does exact from all her members such terms as are both sinful and dangerous, that they are such as therefore would have justified us, even if we had been a part of her particular church, in separating from her; nay, would have made it our duty, as it is the duty of every one of her members at this day, to break from her communion.

And this is what I shall in my two next discourses insist upon, both for the sake of confirming those who hear me, in the true and genuine principles of the reformation, as also for the sake of our brethren who remain within the pale of that church, and who, indeed, if any particular proof were wanting of their being

what they are, appear from some late publications of two of their bishops[*], to be still kept in the same gross ignorance of the true principles of Christianity, to be still in "the very gall of "bitterness*." To endeavour to chase that darkness from their eyes, is certainly whenever the opportunity offers, our duty; though shut out and guarded as they are from access to the true light, it is a task little better than hopeless. One way, indeed, there is, which is open to us at all times, and which must be profitable for that as for every good purpose. Let us not only preach the good doctrine, but practise it. Let us, therefore, not spare to pray God that he would graciously assist us in these as in all our endeavours to serve him; that thus, under the guidance of his Holy Spirit, and to the edification and instruction even of those who hold us in execration and contempt, "our light may "so shine before men, that they may see our "good works, and glorify our Father which is "in Heaven."

[*] Dr. Troy's Pastoral Letter, and Dr. Milner's various publications.

* Acts viii. 23.

SERMON V.

2 Tim. iii. 5.

Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof.

There is a wonderful resemblance, as I have already had an opportunity of pointing out, between the heresies of the earlier ages, and those of modern times. Error, indeed, and more especially religious error, in all its endless varieties, almost always proceeds from the same motives, tends to the same ends, and works by the same means. We must not be surprised, therefore, if we find the false teachers among the first Christians, recommending themselves to their disciples by nearly the same pretences

as were held forth by those who, in later ages, have succeeded them in the great career of imposition and fraud. We shall find, in particular, what I hinted in my first discourse, to be true, that the greatest dangers to which the true religion has been exposed, have proceeded, not so much from those who openly rejected its doctrines, as from those who partly held, and by corrupting, undermined the faith. True piety and true devotion are, indeed, by the appointment of our gracious Maker, so congenial with the mind of man, that they are readily received, and not without great difficulty parted with. Even they who are the most dissolute and abandoned in their lives, who, the most entirely in practice cast off the fear of God and the belief of his word, do yet seldom venture publicly to avow, or unqualifiedly to profess that they do so. And this is shewn even in the most avowed adversaries and oppugners of the truth. For atheism has never been to any great extent, or, at least, has not continued for any length of time to be in fashion. On the contrary, the most powerful attacks upon Revelation which have been made in our days have originated with those who affected a great zeal for the honour of God, and declared their only anxiety to be the reclaiming of mankind from what they called superstition, and the confining of them strictly to that knowledge of their Maker,

which, they said, was implanted in us by nature, and which they pretended, therefore, could not mislead. It is not my business, at present, to shew how falsely this was pretended, and how little of certainty, or of any thing approaching to it, there is in deism. I only mention this, as one proof among the many which might be adduced, of the conviction which universally prevails, that there is no destroying the true religion, but by substituting something in its place. "The form of godliness" must, we see, be sought after and assumed, even by those who most "deny the power thereof." Let the phantom be ever so unsubstantial, some object more or less determinate there must be to engage the minds of men, in the absence of a better principle. Where there is not this lure of a higher and more refined sort of knowledge held out, the mode which is most frequently adopted, for catching the attention of the weaker brethren, is that of affecting and teaching a more rigorous sanctity of manners, or some novel and striking species of devotion. The imagination is to be engaged, either by grossly visible objects and a higher degree of pomp and external ceremony, or some new mode of approaching God, no matter whether more easy, or more apparently difficult; often, by a shew of bodily mortification and self-denial, carried to a surprising pitch.

This, indeed, forms a prominent feature in the history of all false religions; we trace the principle, not only in the horrible sacrifices offered up to Moloch, in the priests of Cybele, and the vestal virgins of old, but in the faquirs and the bonzes of these days, whose voluntary sufferings and dreadful penances exceed even all that is told, whether truly or falsely, of the hermits and the ascetics of the earlier as well as of the darker ages. The fact is, that whatever is difficult to be achieved or to be borne is apt to impress us with an idea of merit, and there will never be wanting ambitious or vain persons, who, for the sake of the distinction which it may procure them, will endure the severest hardships. But, besides, experience tells us, that the greater part of mankind find it more easy to make even the most painful but determinate sacrifice, than to renounce a favourite vice, or abstain from any indulgence of passion which is become habitual. "Will the Lord be pleased "with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands "of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for "my transgression, the fruit of my body for the "sin of my soul?" Such was the proferred devotion of those who were reminded that their duty was of a more reasonable, and, one would have thought, a more easy sort. "He hath "shewed thee, O man, what is good, and now "what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do

"justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly "before thy God*?"

Such was the language of the prophet, even under the old dispensation, which, being a covenant of works, might, with some reason have been supposed to exact severer and more painful terms of obedience than those which were to succeed under the new covenant. We might well, therefore, be surprised, if, under this, which was a covenant of grace, and, of course, in its very terms more favourable and mild, any such misconception of that which God delights in should have been found to prevail. This, however, is the very error, which, even in the days of the apostles, and by them, was complained of. The pure service which the disciples of Christ were bound to offer, very soon became, from its simplicity and unaffected plainness, an offence to those who are always requiring "some great "thing†." The vain and the foolish, as well as the sensual, were soon brought to undervalue that which had no recommendation of outward shew or performance, and to engraft their own wild conceits upon the eternal word of God. Thus the Judaizing Christians of the apostolic age maintained, as we have seen, that the observances of the law were still to subsist after the coming of our Lord, as before; they deter-

* Micah vi. 6, 7, 8. † 2 Kings v. 13.

mined still to continue subject to that "yoke "which neither their fathers nor they were able "to bear*." And, it is upon the very same principle, that, by the bishops of Rome in later days, every encouragement has been given to the superinduction of useless and burthensome ceremonies; that penances have been imposed, and a wonderful merit has been ascribed to mortifications and austerities of all kinds; and thus the attention of even sincere believers has been drawn away from the practice of piety and of charity, and their worship has been made, in a great measure, to terminate in objects not only of mere human institution, but often manifestly derogating from the honour of God, and set up in opposition to his commandments.

The motive and the end in both cases were the same; they only differed in the degree to which the corruption was carried. The teachers marked out by St. Paul, did, indeed, "creep "into houses and lead captive silly women†." But the bishops of Rome flew at a higher and more extended quarry; they grasped at no less than the empire of the world. Still the aim of the one and of the other (as perhaps it has been of every sectary,) was the acquisition of wealth and of power. In the prosecution of their object, it will be seen with what wonderful

* Acts xv. 10. † 2 Tim. iii. 6.

dexterity successive popes have worked upon the credulity of mankind, and laid, as it were, every human infirmity under contribution. Of the different superstitions which were pressed into their service, some might have been considered as only foolish or indifferent, if it had not been for the end to which they were employed; but others were, in the very nature of them, abominable and impious; since, however disguised and masked, it is impossible to consider them in any other light than that of gross idolatry, and as in various ways derogating from the sufficiency of the atonement by Christ. Others there are, which, under "a form of godliness," led, almost unavoidably, to dissoluteness of morals. Out of all these, when arrived to their full maturity, and then only, turned into articles of faith, was engendered, as I have formerly observed, that monster which may be considered as the consummation of all. Persecution, in all its various forms was let loose, so that no man should be suffered to exist who had not received the "mark of "the beast*." Those who only expressed a wish, who only ventured to breathe a sigh after a purer worship, were considered as rebels against the vicegerent of God, and as the most dangerous of offenders. They were vexed and harassed in all manner of ways, cast into dungeons, driven into exile, or committed to the flames.

* Rev. xiii. 16, 17.

Thus was the empire of this usurping power established in blood, and became almost universally triumphant, till, at length, the impudence with which its abominations were practised, and the length to which they were carried, shocked the common sense of mankind, and Providence was pleased to raise up a succession of zealous men, by whose exertions many kingdoms were rescued from the bondage in which they were held; and stations were thus secured from which the genuine light of the gospel might be made to dawn upon all those whose eyes were not obstinately or forcibly shut against the truth.

Such is the nature of the abuses, from the practice of which, our ancestors, by the grace of God, were enabled to withdraw, while with many a hard and painful struggle they obtained for us, as for themselves, the comfort and the liberty of worshipping God according to the way which he has enjoined in his word. This it was, which, while it imposed upon us the necessity and the duty of reformation, did yet only by consequence separate us from our brethren of the Romish persuasion. For, certain it is, and it cannot be too often repeated, it was not we, but they, who made the division. Our clergy, in the first years of the reign of our Elizabeth, admitted to communion, without any question, all those Romanists who chose to

come, as most, if not all, of them came to our places of public worship. This they continued to do, until the pope, fearing, with good reason, the effects which such habits might produce, forbad them so to do; and this at the very moment when he thundered out his anathemas against our sovereign, and laid the kingdom under an interdict.

We have it, therefore, in our power to say, as has been said, that, in that view, and as members of the Catholic church, it is they that have forsaken us, and not we them; so that, in every possible way, we are warranted in retorting upon them the charge of schism, since to them, properly and in every point of view, it belongs. I have, at the same time, admitted, that if circumstances had been different, if our church, after the death of Queen Mary, had continued popish, it would have been the duty of every man who valued his salvation, to separate himself from her, and not to touch the "accursed thing." I say, again, that if any dissenter can fix upon us any fundamental doctrine which is inconsistent with scripture, or even any form or ceremony which is plainly contrary to what is revealed, he will stand excused in leaving us, he may, and ought to go where his conscience may better be satisfied.

This it is which calls upon me to enter into a particularity of detail which I should, perhaps,

otherwise have avoided. It is become necessary, again, to bring forward to notice, errors so often refuted as to be considered, by most of us at least, to be quite exploded. But there are other circumstances also, already touched upon, which make it expedient, nay, an absolute point of duty, for us no longer to be indifferent or in any degree negligent upon such subjects. Popery, we need to be reminded, is not extinct. It has indeed, of late years, wonderfully revived, and rears its crest in these realms with all the ardour of confidence. But this can never happen, the church of Rome can never maintain her principles without the most direct and absolute condemnation of ours. To her catechumens, to those whom she is striving to proselyte, she must and does represent us as rebels against the divine authority, as wilful and inveterate oppugners of the truth[1]. That such at-

[1] The reader may turn to what I have said in note 3 of the preceding sermon. It is not only Ward's book which holds this sort of language, but all the recent publications of the Romanists in these kingdoms breathe the same spirit. In Dr. Milner's "Inquiry "into certain vulgar Opinions" just come out, the language of our homilies is even reprobated as "blasphemous." "Such," says this gentleman at p. 127, "is the blessed change," (speaking of the destruction of a monastery,) "which is *blasphemously* attributed "to the 'light and spirit of God' in the book of Homilies! and "for making which, the obscene and irreligious Henry is likened "to the *pious* Josaphat, Josias, and Hesechias." Hom. vol. 1. Sermon on good Works, Part iii. I will add p. 34, (of the fol. Ed.) where the reader may see that the word "pious" is not found. It

tempts must always, however secretly and quietly have been made, was in the nature of things; but we may now, every one of us, know for certain, that such is the case. Miracles too are pretended to be wrought in testimony of what is called the Catholic church, and every endeavour is used to seduce individuals from our communion*.

is inserted, evidently in order to give a higher zest to the indecent sarcasm which is here thrown out upon the Reformation. Had, however, Henry been as "obscene and irreligious" as Dr. Milner and other papists represent him, he might, notwithstanding, be "God's true and faithful minister," nay, and enlightened by the "spirit of God" in doing the particular work to which he was appointed. Dr. M. if he reads his Bible, might recollect Jehu and Cyrus, and other characters who are so described by the sacred penmen, though they were, or became afterwards Idolaters, and so open rebels against God. But this is a very slight specimen indeed, of the abuse which this right reverend author, like the rest of his brethren, delights in heaping upon every one of our old reformers. This we find at p. 381. "In this there is no mention of the numerous and revolting blasphemies and immoralities" (immoralities too!) "with which the works of Luther and Calvin abound, "no notice of the perfidy, treason, and rebellion taught and practised by Cranmer, Ridley, Knox, and every head of the reformation in every country where it has prevailed," &c. Perfectly parallel to this is the language of Ward, in his Preface to the "Errata," where he tells us that the first protestant translators of the Bible were "men of scandalous and notoriously wicked lives;" and instances "Luther, Calvin, Beza, Bucer, Cranmer, Tindal, &c." I believe, a more impudent and gross slander, never was uttered by the mouth of man.

* One of these supposed miracles has been detailed with great pomp by Dr. Milner as vicar apostolical for the middle district, under the title of "Authentic Documents relative to the miraculous

It therefore behoves us, at least, who are entrusted with the cure of souls, not to slumber

cure of Winifred White of Wolverhampton, at St. Winifred's well, on the 28th of June, 1005." Printed by Keating and Co. This good lady states herself to have been attacked with a disorder which appears to have puzzled both the surgeon and the physician in more ways than one, and which, after about two years' languishing under it, she fancied might be removed by going to St. Winifred's well; and the event, it seems, answered her expectation. She walked down to the well, with the greatest apparent difficulty, and immediately upon being dipped into it, rose up perfectly restored in health and strength. The protestant reader who reads this curious production, with all the attestations, and even the laboured comments of the right reverend historian of this tale, will see nothing in it but what may be accounted for by the not unnatural supposition of this woman's having sufficient art and perseverance to carry through an imposture by which she might, in many ways, be a gainer. I am informed by a most respectable clergyman of the other branch of the United Church, that in Ireland such exhibitions are very common. One example of it in former times I have met with and cannot help extracting from a recantation sermon by Anthony Egan, late a Franciscan friar, and general confessor in that kingdom, preached in London in the year 1673. Speaking of the corruptions of popery, he says "I may "tell you what offence I took at these vain stories which they "have of miracles, and especially when I discovered their grand "impostures therein. For, about seven years ago, a priest, near the "city of Limbreck, (Limerick,) by name William Sarchwell, had, "for fifty shillings, hired a woman to pretend herself a cripple from "her birth, and that she had a revelation that if she dipped her-"self in such a well, whilst the priest said mass, she should be "recovered of her infirmity. The plot thus laid, and accordingly "executed, she comes halting to the well, and returns out of it "perfectly cured," (exactly as Winifred White did,) "which "became a miracle to the people," (here, it is not only a miracle to the people, but to the bishop,) "which did not only get to the "cheat a vast sum of money, but also confirmed the people in

at our posts: we must at all times be ready "to "give an answer to them that ask a reason of "the faith that is in us*." And we can neither defend ourselves from the charge which the servants of the pope thus bring against us, nor prevent our flock from being infected with false doctrine, but by shewing that what we reject is not rejected by us without cause; that if we loathe what they teach, it is because it runs counter to the whole tenor of scripture and is a manifest abomination in the sight of God.

The exposing of the false and pernicious tenets of the Romish church may therefore be considered as being now especially our duty, not only as we are bound at all times to oppose falsehood and to maintain truth; but as it is again become a necessary measure of self-defence. This however will be found to be a task of no great difficulty. Our predecessors have so distinguished themselves in this career as to leave every facility to those who will only follow their steps. They have provided such a store as well as such a choice of weapons, as are fitted for all occasions, and proof against every attack. Al-

"their superstition. But after some time the counterfeit had some "remorse of conscience, and came to me to confession in order to "absolution," (he was great penitentiary or confessor general) "which I would not grant till she had declared the whole story "to the congregation, which she did accordingly." He tells of other miracles of the same sort, but this may suffice.

* 1 Peter iii. 15.

though therefore, under the present circumstances, I think it proper to detain you for some time upon this part of my subject, I do not mean to dwell upon it at any great length. To touch upon a few of the principal heads may be sufficient. Indeed one radical and fundamental error, one corrupt doctrine, of the nature and magnitude of those with which that church is over-run, would of itself be a sufficient cause for any separation; much more for such a separation as ours, which in truth as I have already proved requires no apology. If we shew the church of Rome, but in one point to be anti-christian, we stand sufficiently justified in this respect even if no other communion were in question than that which is becoming and desirable for all independent churches to have with each other. But we are doubly justified when the demand which she makes upon us, is, not only to meet her upon equal terms, and to give her the right hand of fellowship, but absolutely to submit ourselves to her will, and to pay unreserved obedience to her decrees: for this would be wilfully and wantonly to follow after error, and, as the apostle says, "to make "ourselves the servants of corruption." This would be, as the same scripture goes on, "to "make our latter end worse than the begin-"ning*."

* 2 Peter ii. 19, 20.

We say then, that it is impossible for us to join in communion with the church of Rome, nay, that she is to be avoided as an abomination; that every man is bound at his peril, to "come out of her."

First, because she is idolatrous.

And this idolatry is shewn not only in the invocation of the saints and the honour paid to images and relics, but most avowedly and directly in the adoration of the bread and wine at the celebration of the mass.

Secondly, because she derogates in various ways from the sufficiency of our Lord's atonement, and so as much as in her lies, she "makes "the cross of Christ of none effect*."

And this she does by the efficacy which she attributes to the merits of her saints, as well as by the ability which she declares to be in every man to effect even more than his own salvation.

Thirdly, because she entertains notions and inculcates ideas of Christian perfection, not only erroneous in themselves but in their consequences highly pernicious: as they almost inevitably lead to great dissoluteness of manners, and at least divert the attention of mankind from the real and essential duties of faith and charity, to practices the most useless and trifling, and even ridiculous.

* 1 Cor. i. 17.

And this is shewn in the peculiar and extravagant honour which she ascribes to virginity; in the consequent denial of marriage to the clergy; in the institution of monastic orders; and in the extraordinary efficacy which she attributes to a punctual compliance with her rules and ceremonies, and more especially the submitting to extreme and painful acts of voluntary penance and unnecessary mortification.

That this does by no means comprehend the whole catalogue of her errors, not even many of the grosser sort, will be easily perceived: but some of them, such, for example, as her adherence to pretended traditions, even in opposition to the commandments of God; her praying in an unknown tongue, and denying to the laity the use of the scriptures, and of all controversial writings, except by special permission, may rather be regarded as means by which she carried her purposes into effect than as original corruptions: and they will properly form a separate class and come to be considered by themselves. I shall also as I go along have occasion to observe upon that great and fundamental taint which runs through the whole, that the end which she has uniformly kept in view, whether in devising or in adopting these corruptions of the true doctrine, has been the advancement of her power and the increase of her wealth: more especially the exaltation of

the pope above every human authority; even to the conferring upon him honours and titles which could not be assumed without the highest presumption, not to say actual impiety[s].

[s] Not to mention those common titles of "God's vicar" and "Christ's vicar," and his ordinary appellation of "most holy father," he has in many cases assumed the power and even the style of God himself, as may be seen in Mr. Granville Sharp's inquiry founded on the tenth chapter of the Revelations. There is a remarkable passage in Erasmus to this purpose. In a long note upon the word "ματαιολογια" (in 1 Tim. i. 6,) after instancing many of the questions in the schools, he goes on, "Jam vero de Romani "pontificis potestate pene negotiosius disputatur quan de potestate "Dei, dum quærimus de duplici illius potestate, et an possit abro-"gare quod scriptis apostolicis decretum est. An possit aliquid "statuere quod pugnet cum doctrinâ evangelicâ. An possit novum "articulum condere in fidei symbolo. Utrum majorem potestatem habeat quam Petrus an parem. An possit præcipere angelis. "An possit universum purgatorium, quod vocant, tollere. *Utrum* "*simplex homo sit, an quasi Deus. An participet utramque naturam cum* "*Christo. An clementior sit quam fuerit Christus*, cum non legatur "Christum quenquam a purgatoriis pœnis revocâsse. An solus "omnium non possit errare. Sexcenta id genus disputantur magnis editis voluminibus, &c." He says too that this is done "non "sine magnâ suspicione adulationis," but supposes that Leo the 10th could not be pleased with such flattery. The reader must have observed particularly the impiety of making the pope "quasi "Deus," in some sort a God, and not only setting him above Peter, but doubting whether he was not more full of mercy than Christ, since it is no where read that Christ ever delivered a soul out of purgatory! That these ideas are not worn out may be concluded from what I am informed by a most respectable friend of mine who has lived in Italy some years, and tells me that at Rome it is a common saying among the lower classes that "the pope is *greater* than "God." "Il papa é piu che Dio per noi altri," was actually said by a servant in his family.

I will say further, that if I have not specifically mentioned the tenet of transubstantiation, so notorious and so deservedly hateful, because before that, more than any other idol, martyrs have been sacrificed, and innocent blood has been poured out, it is because I consider it as substantially included in the adoration of the mass; as indeed the establishment of the one followed close upon the practice of the other. If I have not neither mentioned purgatory nor indulgences by name, it is because both of them are so connected with the boasted sacrament of penance, they both so essentially depend upon the doctrine of merits, that there is no treating of one of them without the other's also coming into discussion.

But there will remain other points to be ascertained, or rather objections to be encountered before we shall be suffered quietly to proceed to a declaration of the doctrines which are professed by the Romish church, or to reckon up the corruptions with which both her faith and her modes of worship are infected. With all her boasts of infallibility, she has never disclaimed any accommodation to circumstances. What could not be professed with impunity, or without awakening suspicions which might be prejudicial to her worldly interests, she has always allowed those of her sons upon whose attachment she could rely to dissemble or to

modify as they might find it convenient. Hence has arisen the difficulty formerly mentioned by me of fixing upon our adversaries the errors which they hold, of bringing them fairly to the contest. This system of evasion has by the Jesuits in particular been followed to such a degree and with so little shame and reserve (even to the denying or dissembling the very distinguishing tenet of their order) that their name has become proverbial for equivocation. But it has also been the case, to a greater or less extent, with every description of their teachers: nay, with every individual who had leisure or ability to join in what was considered as the common cause. There were indeed, ages before the reformation, and there are even now, countries where argument may be overborne by authority, where silence may be enjoined under the penalty of death or of torment; but, among happier nations, where inquiry cannot be stifled, other arts must be resorted to. When pressed therefore with the absurdity, with the evil tendency, with the impiety of their doctrines, the Romanists seldom hesitate to disclaim what they cannot defend; at the same time all that is atrocious is softened down, all that is glaring coloured over with a thousand specious pretences. When necessary, even the authority of councils is disputed, and frivolous and false distinctions are made between canons of discip-

line and of doctrine. At one time we are told that a tenet is not binding because only the decree of an individual pope, then another is held to be unsound because the council where it was declared was in some respect faulty, or not approved by the infallible head of the church. In one moment it is declared that this same church will not endure any the least tampering with her discipline by unauthorized individuals, of course not by the laity: and in the next we are informed, perhaps by the same man, that whatever popes or councils may decree, is of no validity unless it be received and (by the legislature, that is of course by laymen) allowed in each particular country. When all fails recrimination is employed, and circumstances partly real and partly supposed, are adduced, which when examined appear most manifestly either not to apply at all, or to have taken place under the influence of popery operating upon its very adversaries[4].

[4] Of all these different modes of evasion the reader will see numberless instances if he will only turn to the contest between Archbishop Wake and Bossuet, or rather the defenders of Bossuet, and the other tracts which follow in the beginning of the 3d Vol. of Preservatives against Popery. Bossuet's expositions and the other tract lately reprinted here, entitled, "A Papist represented and "misrepresented," are there particularly refuted. More of this sort of fencing may be seen in Dr. Milner's controversy with Dr. Sturges, and his later publications, as well as the Remarks on the Bishop of Durham's Charge; as also in my Remarks upon them in

Upon the various ways in which this sort of spirit is manifested, I shall have occasion to observe as I go along: but there are two or three general observations which it will not be amiss to make in the very beginning, and to bring forward as a sort of protest against all such attempts to mislead.

In the first place we must be allowed most pointedly and decidedly to insist, that in arguing upon a religion which was avowedly intended, as for all sorts of men, so especially for the poor, we have a right to take it as it is understood and practised by the people at large; at least as it is suffered by the pastors and doctors to be by their flocks understood and practised. It is in vain for them to tell us that such and such uses of images and relics, or such and such ideas of indulgences are erroneously imputed to them, if we can with truth say that they are the uses which prevail and the ideas which are entertained by the great body of that communion, by the weak and the ignorant. Still more have we a right to say, if the fact will bear us out, as it certainly will, that, let the use or the idea be as mistaken as it may, it must pass for that which is authorized, until it be shewn that by authority the mistake is point-

the "Sequel to the Serious Examination," and "Reply to Dr. "Milner's Observations."

ed out and the error corrected: and that too in such a way as to prevent any possible misunderstanding on the part of the most unlearned.

But, secondly, we may with truth allege, that any subterfuge or ambiguity is more especially not to be tolerated in a church which lays such extraordinary stress upon the necessity of certainty in doctrine; whose great argument for the recognition of one infallible head wholly rests upon this principle, that without such an oracle to resort to, it will be impossible to be satisfied what is to be believed, or to be practised. That the least degree of allowance in this respect becomes still more preposterous when we recollect that she contends not only for a visible but an infallible head; when she distinctly asserts that she never can be deceived. It is sufficient therefore for those who oppose her to shew that at some time or other she has taught the doctrine or advanced the proposition which is disputed; because what she has once maintained she cannot relinquish without foregoing those pretensions to infallibility, which, according to her own tenets, are inseparable from her existence. By her own act she has placed herself in a situation where to recede but one step is total defeat, to confess but one error is self-destruction.

But the utter inadmissibility of any such modifications as we have been speaking of, the in-

congruity of giving weight to any supposed modern improvements in practice or refinements in doctrine, will appear more strongly when the point is considered with a view to the very question which we are agitating, to that which is the avowed subject of these discourses. For the inquiry which we are now pursuing is whether our national church was rightly founded in separating herself from the church of Rome at the era of the reformation: in other words, to which of the churches must be imputed the schism which then took place. If therefore we were to allow that ever so great a change for the better had in later times been effected in the faith as well as in the discipline of that church, and if we should forbear to press upon her that consequence of her own pretensions which effectually debars her from making use of such a plea; if, in short, we were, in excess of candour and of charity, to make it for her, still it would be of no avail. It would and must still be of no importance to the matter in dispute, since it could never tend to shew that our Henry and Elizabeth were schismatics, or that Paul the 3d or Pius the 5th were justified in the excommunications which they pronounced, and the bulls which they issued in order to deprive those sovereigns of their kingdoms. It is indeed, I believe, very true that the reformation has had a salutary effect even upon those by whom it is

most loudly condemned. The liberty with which the Protestants have been necessarily led, and have happily been empowered to reprove and to expose the abominations which took place in the Romish communion, has made a certain degree of caution necessary even among the most corrupt of her members. Of late years decency has not been so grossly violated, nor religion so shamefully insulted as it was by some popes at that very period, and still more by the impudent debaucheries and erroneous vices of many of those who had gone before. And this improvement, whatever it may be, has of course been carried farther in those countries where, as with us, the Romanists bear but an inconsiderable proportion in number to their Protestant neighbours; where therefore any gross immorality, any long or systematic perseverance in the practice of scandalous vices could scarcely escape observation. Still however let us admit as much of this as we may, let us think as well as they would wish us to do of the sincerity and purity of life of our misguided brethren, we are still bound to repel every claim which they would found upon such merits: we may and must, if we would judge according to the real truth of the case, insist upon going back to the period when the separation took place; we must ask the question, decisive as it will be, what was the state of re-

ligion and morality among the adherents of popery in the sixteenth century[5]?

[5] The gross immoralities and abominations practised by many of the popes are recorded by their own historians. Every one must know that the council of Constance was called for upon the ground of a general and thorough reformation in the church being absolutely necessary. Many writers of that time have left upon record their strong sense of the abuses which they wished in vain to see removed. Take one or two specimens from Nicholas de Clemangis, a most learned and excellent doctor of those days. "Tanta "est improborum in singulis professionibus exuberantia, ut vix "mille inter unus reperitur qui id quod sua professio exigit, sin-"ceriter faciat. Quinetiam si simplex aliquis, si frugalis in col-"legio aliquo vel conventu latam et lubricam perditorum vitam "non sectetur, fabula ridicula cæteris efficitur, insolensque et sin-"gularis insanus aut hypocrita continuo appellatur, &c. De cor-"rupto statu ecclesiæ." c. 25. But what is said in c. 15 goes much beyond this. "Jam illud, observo, quale est, quod plerisque "in diœcesibus rectores parochiarum ex certo et conducto cum "suis prælatis pretio passim et publicé concubinas tenent?" I have read somewhere of a complaint made by certain of the clergy in a diocese, that the bishop having established this sort of tax or composition upon the keeping of concubines, exacted it even from those who preserved their chastity and required no such indulgence. Gerson, Peter d'Ailly, and Espence (Espencæus) all of them great names wrote to the same effect. And above all the reader should consult two most curious reports made by certain prelates and cardinals commissioned to inquire into the state of the church. The one made to Paul III. in 1538, and the other to Julius III. in 1553, the originals of which are published in the Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum. Ed. Lond. 1690. Vol. ii. pp. 231 and 644. In the former there is the following passage. "In hâc "urbe," (that is Rome) "meretrices ut matronæ incedunt per "urbem, seu mulâ vehuntur, quas assectantur de mediâ die no-"biles familiares cardinalium clericique. Nullâ in Urbe videmus "hanc corruptionem præterquam in hâc omnium exemplari. "Habitant etiam insignes ædes." A translation of these reports,

The truth is however that no material change has taken place: for the reasons already alleged no such change can have taken place. The doctrines of the church remain the same, and upon what can a better practice be-founded? "The tree," as we had formerly occasion to observe being "corrupt," what must "the fruit" be?

First then, the church of Rome is idolatrous. And she shews this idolatry, in the first instance, in the worship of images and of relics. The facts here will hardly be disputed. She has images in her churches to which or before which the same sort of adoration is practised as is paid to God himself. Incense is burned, candles are lighted, vows and offerings are made: men bow down to them. But here the pretence is that the adoration is not paid to the image, but to the being whom it represents. This however is a conclusion so far from being natural or obvious to the understanding that the council

with a preface by Dr. Clagett, will be found in the first Volume of the Preservatives against Popery, tit. i. p. 76. Of this excellent collection, from which the reader will see that I have borrowed largely, I can only say that it ought to be in every Protestant clergyman's library. I may say the same of the Fasiculus verum expetendarum et fugiendarum, where the reader will find the several treatises of the authors above mentioned. It is the more valuable as the first compiler was a Roman catholic (Orthuinus Gratius) though the appendix added by the London editor be perhaps the most valuable part.

of Trent while it ordered images to be retained and due worship to be paid to them, while it anathematized all those who shall presume to maintain a contrary opinion, yet found it necessary as a sort of salvo, expressly to declare that this is not because of any divinity or virtue in the image itself. And in what is called the Trent catechism the ministers of parishes are directed to instruct the people upon this point, as often as the opportunity offers. All which is a sufficient proof out of the mouth of our adversaries themselves of what we well know, that the common people do really worship the image itself when they kneel before it, and approach it with any other act of devotion.

But, if it were not so, if all the adoration which is thus paid, were by every votary of the image, really and truly paid to the prototype; what excuse is this but such as any heathen might make, such as indeed was made by all the opponents of Christianity in the first ages. When pressed with the absurdity of worshipping idols, of making stocks and stones the objects of their devotion, they answered as the Romanists now do, that their worship was paid in effect to the God, after whose likeness the image was made or whom it represented. But this was never allowed either by Origen, by Arnobius, or St. Austin, or any other of the fathers, to be a sufficient or available plea. The truth

is moreover, that so far was this from being a practice approved in the earlier ages, that it no sooner appeared than it was expressly condemned. Nay, it pleased God that in this instance also the very same pope who, as I have mentioned in a former discourse, disclaimed the supremacy soon afterwards usurped by his successors, even that pope, a saint of their church, should bear testimony against them and declare himself against the practice*. The third council of Constantinople also, which was the first council held on the subject, in the strongest terms, as it is well known, condemned all such worship: and, though the second council of Nice soon after that made a contrary decision, so far were the western churches from admiting its authority, that a council was held at Frankfort in opposition to it, where the old and the true doctrine was maintained. If notwithstanding the popes contrived afterwards to gain their point, and procured the worship of images to be adopted, this did not become general till near a thousand years after Christ, and we know how soon after that it came again to be called into question.

But could the advocates of the Romish church produce ever so long and so continued a prac-

* Gregory the first, Lib. 9. Ep. 9. Indict. 4. and see Moreton's Catholic Appeal, p. 28.

But of the strict obligation of this law we need perhaps no other proof than the mode which our adversaries have taken to evade it. For this purpose an improper division of the decalogue has been adopted. According to this the second commandment is made a mere appendage to the first[7]. By this two advan-

among the Greeks than our lady of Loretto among the Papists? There are I believe also many images which boast a descent from heaven as well as that; or at least thousands of relics which are asserted to have been miraculously discovered. How little this was countenanced by the primitive fathers may be seen in Whitby's Worship of the Church of Rome justly condemned. Preservatives against Popery, tit. vi. as well as Stillingfleet. But I will insert one passage from Tertullian, as it directly combats their vain distinction between images and idols; upon the ground of which we are accused of perverting Scripture, because we translate the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make any graven *image*," instead of "*thing*." The father is arguing against every species of idolatry in the most comprehensive sense: and he adds, "It is necessary to "observe the meaning of the word εἰδος. In the Greek it stands for form (forma) from whence the diminutive εἰδωλον being derived, equally makes with us a smaller form (formula). "Igitur "omnis forma vel formula idolum se dici exposcit. Inde idololatria omnis circa idolum famulatus et servitus." "Therefore all "forms or representations of things whether great or small, require "to be distinguished by the name of idol. Hence *every sort* of *attendance* or *service* about an idol is *idolatry*." De Idololatriâ, c. 3. Can any words by more strong or precise? And will the Papists explain this away as they in vain attempt to do the words of Gregory the 1st. That εἰδωλον is in fact the same as "image," contrary to another distinction of theirs, take the authority of Homer,

Τηλε με εἰργουσιν ψυχαι εἰδωλα καμοντων. Ιλ. ψ. 72.

[7] For this they shelter themselves under the authority of Austin, I might say his *solitary* authority, for he is only supported by Ful-

tages are intended to be gained. First, an opportunity is given, as they think of restricting the prohibition to idols in the strictest sense: that is to images of false gods: because it is said that to the forbidding of false gods only the first commandment refers; and, if what follows is only meant in the way of explanation or comment, it can relate only to the same subject. Whereas if the second commandment be taken as a distinct precept, it can mean no-

gentius near two centuries after. All the other ancient fathers, and Josephus and Philo among the Jews, are against them. The reader may consult Stillingfleet and Whitby's tract above cited, p. 268. But even Austin seems at last to have come round to the better opinion; for although in some of his earlier works he makes the first table to comprize only three commandments, and for this quaint reason that it should correspond with the number of persons in the Trinity, Sermo de Decem Chordis, Vol. v. p. 38. Yet in a better hour he reckons them up evidently as we do. In the tract, "contra Duas Epistolas Pelagianorum." Lib. iii. § 10. He is arguing for the observance of the moral part of the law, and instances the decalogue, which requires active performance, excepting, says he, the carnal observance of the sabbath, which signifies spiritual sanctification and rest. "For," he goes on, "who will say that "Christians are not bound to observe that to the one God only "religious worship is to be paid, that an idol is not to be wor-"shipped, that God's name is not to be taken in vain, that parents "are to be honoured, that adulteries, murders and thefts are not to "be committed, nor false witness borne, and that the wife or any "thing else belonging to others shall not be coveted?" "Ut uni "Deo religionis obsequio serviatur, ut idolum non colatur, ut no-"men Domini non accipiatur in vanum, ut parentes honorentur, "ne adulteria, homicidia, furta, falsa testimonia perpetrentur, ne "uxor ne omnino res ulla concupiscatur aliena?"

thing but a positive condemnation of all image-worship whatsoever. A second advantage which is procured by thus classing this part of the decalogue is that the precept is more easily kept out of sight. It cannot indeed *wholly* be suppressed: when the commandments are printed or read at length this clause must appear; but with the ignorant and the unlearned the method usually taken is to use a short form or abbreviation in which the second commandment is made absolutely to disappear. This is or was, I believe, uniformly the case in all Romish countries abroad. It is sometimes the case here: at least I have an example of it in a catechism professing to follow that of Pius the 5th, where indeed the second commandment or rather the words of it are commented upon, but in the summary of the commandments it is not found[s]. This artifice, it must

[s] See Clinton's Catechism sold by Keating and Co. But it further appears that this is what has actually taken place without any attendant explanation in Ireland, under the very auspices of Dr. Troy, the popish archbishop of Dublin. We have there a book of prayers published "permissu superiorum," entitled, "The poor "Man's Manual of Devotions, &c." Dublin, printed by Richard Cross, No. 28, Bridge Street, 1805, where (at p. 17.) immediately after the apostles' creed (the same as we have it) are *their* ten commandments. The second is entirely omitted, and to make up the right number, for the *ninth* we read, "Thou shalt not desire thy neigh-"bour's wife," for the tenth, "Thou shalt not desire thy neigh-"bour's goods." To this book is prefixed the calendar: so that it is evidently designed to be most emphatically the prayer book for

be owned, is a most gross one; and the more so as in consequence of it much difference arises as to what are the ninth and the tenth commandments. For some give the preference to the first, and some to the second clause of the tenth commandment. According to the former the ninth commandment is, "Thou shalt not "covet thy neighbour's house," or "thy neigh-"bour's goods." According to the others it is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." By which latter mode manifest violence is done to the text in taking the words out of their order. And by this very difference and uncertainty, here again as in so many cases, our infallible adversaries are made to bear witness against themselves[9].

papists of the lower class. In the catechism of Pius V. it stands thus, "Ego sum Dominus Deus tuus qui eduxi te de terrâ "Egypti, de domo servitutis. Non habebis deos alienos coram me "non facies tibi sculptile &c." and so stops short before the material words, "Thou shalt not *bow down to them nor worship them.*" A hint which Mr. Clinton has taken, as we see, or rather improved upon.

[9] See the preceding note as to what is done in Ireland. Agreeable to that is the London Catechism. Yet in some books it is the reverse. In the primer or office of the virgin Mary, printed for Coghlan 1780, I find them thus stated, "IX. Thou shalt not "covet thy neighbour's house." "X. Thou shalt not covet thy "neighbour's wife, nor servant, nor handmaid, nor ox, nor ass, "nor any thing that is his." The Trent Catechism above-mentioned puts them together without any division; but in the expo-

I come now to the veneration of relics, for which the arguments that are adduced are so futile, that we may safely pronounce, that they can impose upon none but such as are willing to be deceived. The great advocates for them tell us of St. John the baptist's expression, that he is not "worthy to unloose the latchet of our Sa-"viour's shoes;" which shews, they say, that reverence must be paid to such things. In an

sition makes the distinction between coveting our neighbour's wife, and the other things, and so the Dublin and London bishop's division is the more popish. In truth this is a point which must always have puzzled those who chose so to read the commandments. Our editor of the primer however has the authority of an English council to support him. In the council at Lambeth held under John Peckham in 1281, the ninth commandment is stated to be "non concupisces *domum* proximi tui," which is explained to mean all immoveables, or as we say *real* estate, particularly that of any catholic. "In quo mandato implicité inhibetur cupiditas "possessionis immobilis, Catholici præcipué cujuscunque." In the last of course the wife is thrown in with the "moveables" "res "mobiles." Wilkins's Concilia, Vol. ii. p. 55. Such is the way in which that commandment is split and parcelled out, which St. Paul comprehends in two words; ουκ επιθυμησεις. "Thou shalt "not covet." Rom. xiii. 9. It is remarkable that the precept stands differently in Deuteronomy from what it does in Exodus, as in Deuteronomy the wife is put first. I cannot therefore but think that in putting the words as they stand in Exodus, Providence had it in view to confound those who would thus twist the scriptures to serve their particular ends. Compare Deuteronomy v. with Exodus xx. See further Stillingfleet's Answer to a Papist represented and misrepresented. Preserv. against Popery, tit. ix. p. 302.

other place, they urge the miracle which was wrought by the bones of the prophet Elisha, when, by virtue of them, a dead man was restored to life. They tell us too, of the cures which were wrought by the handkerchiefs from the body of St. Paul, and of the sick which were laid in the streets, in order that, at least, the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow them. Such is the evidence from Scripture which is adduced, and who can but wonder that such passages should be alleged for such a purpose? For, do we hear of any man having preserved or paid religious honour to the latchet of our Saviour's shoe? or to the handkerchiefs which came from the body of the apostle? Were the bones of Elisha, which God had pleased in that one instance, to make the instrument of a miracle, kept up or adored, or held in any veneration? So far from it, we never even hear a word of them, not only in the age when the miracle happened, but in those which followed; nor, I believe, was ever the argument drawn from it heard of till after the reformation. Lastly, it must be allowed, that not even any of them, amidst all their thousands of relics, and it must be said to the praise of their modesty, have ever attempted to shew us the shadow of St. Peter. So that to any man who will but reason in this as he does in other matters, these very instances, instead of commending, will ap-

pear to involve a plain condemnation of the practice. The legends too, which belong to all these relics are so fabulous upon the face of them, the very manner of their being found, and of their genuineness being ascertained, has, in every instance, so little, not only of reason, but of common sense in it, that no man who is not under the influence of the grossest bigotry can avoid being shocked and disgusted at them, or can see them in any other than the most ridiculous light.

What makes the doctrine not only every way suspicious but abominable, is that we shall find the discovery of these pretended relics to have been in many, I believe, in most instances, so timed as evidently to serve a particular purpose, to procure credit to some order, some saint, or some tenet, and at all times to have answered the purpose of laying the credulity of the people under heavy contributions[10]. This last abuse had grown to such a height in the thirteenth century, that it it was formally reproved in the fourth council of Lateran, and certain provi-

[10] This traffic began very early; we hear of it in the fourth century. Austin, in complaining of the lazy and vagabond monks of his time, mentions that they went about selling relics. "Alii "membra martyrum, si tamen martyrum, venditant," &c. De opere monachorum, c. xxviii. This abuse, as Fleury observes, has continued ever since, notwithstanding the regulations made in the ivth Lateran on that subject. H. E. B. lxxvii. §. 55.

sions made for discriminating the genuine from the false relics. This, however, has not prevented, nor was it seriously meant to prevent the continuance of this gainful trade, or the multiplication of the articles themselves, which has gone on to such a degree as in some cases involves an impossibility. Since it has been truly observed, that more wood is shewn as having been a part of the cross, than many such crosses would have supplied, and of one saint there are three heads shewn in three different places, all equally well authenticated[11].

With all these abuses before their eyes, the council of Trent decreed, that due worship should continue to be paid to them, and in this respect it has gone even greater length than it had gone in respect of images, since it has subjoined no caution as to the extent or nature of the worship. Every abuse, therefore, which is

[11] Of John the Baptist. I believe I might have said four. See Fleury, H. E. in the proper places. The same thing has happened to the body of St. Mary Magdalen, which was shewn in Provence and in Burgundy, and in both places was visited with great devotion by Saint Louis. See the same historian, b. lxxxiii. § 48, compared with b. lxxxv. § 52. In the latter case the saint was present at their removal for the purpose of their being put into a silver shrine; and it is said, that both he and the pope's legate, who also was present, took a part of these relics. The historian observes, that this shews, that he (St. Louis,) could not have any great idea, ("il ne croyoit pas trop,") that they were at Sainte Beaume in Provence, though he had gone there to visit them thirteen years before.

committed by the most ignorant of their communion, in the adoration which is paid to relics, may be most justly charged upon the church herself, since, in a matter of such importance, she has taken so little care to guard against error.

This is said only in case of her advocates disclaiming any part of the superstition with which relics are, in fact, adored. But, that she could not, with any justice, do this, may be shewn from her public offices. One relic, at least, the cross of Christ, nay, its representation is there made the subject of the most direct adoration; it is even addressed in terms which can only be properly directed to the Supreme Being. And that this is not done unadvisedly, appears further from the declared opinion of their greatest doctors, who lay it down expressly, that it is entitled to exactly the same degree of worship as the Saviour whom it bore. It varies the case but little, or rather it makes it stronger, that this higher degree of worship is only reserved to the true cross itself, but that other crosses are to be adored only in an inferior degree, because this only proves more decidedly the solemnity of the act, and the deliberation with which it is adopted[18].

[18] See in Preserv. against Popery, the case of poor Imbert, who, trusting to the exposition of Bossuet, felt himself authorised to tell the people, at the time of the exaltation of the cross, that they were

From the worship of images and relics, we may pass on to the invocation of saints and

not to worship the cross itself, but Jesus Christ crucified in the presence of the cross; but he was opposed by the curé or rector, who said, "No, no, the wood, the wood." Imbert replied, "No, no, Jesus Christ not the wood," and when the other went on "Ecce lignum, adoremus," Imbert took him up, saying, "on which the Saviour of the world hung, come let "us adore this Saviour of the world." For this Imbert was prosecuted, and without any hearing interdicted by the archbishop of Bourdeaux his ordinary, and even threatened with perpetual imprisonment and chains. Upon this he appealed to Bossuet, requesting his protection, in order that he might have liberty to defend himself; but he could get no redress. See his letter dated June 13, 1683, and Wake's observations in his answer to the bishop of Meaux's second letter. Bossuet said the man was "weak "and ignorant and that his" (the bishop's) "doctrine was totally "different from what that *daring* person had presumed to broach." Preserv. against Popery, tit. ix. pp. 98 & 134. Through the whole of this controversy it is wonderful to what shifts the bishop of Meaux and his vindicator were put, and how clearly they are refuted by Wake. This is the more deserving the notice of my readers as exactly the same sort of management is going on among the Romanists of this day, and the same complaints of unfairness and want of candour in Protestants are alleged and refuted without ceasing. If the reader will have the goodness only to turn to p. 137 & seq. he will find a string of accusations against the clergy of the church of England of that age, and Wake in particular very much resembling the abuse which has been and is daily bestowed upon me and my brethren by Dr. Milner. See his "Ob-"servations on the Sequel," and his "Inquiry," passim. As to the fact of the cross being adored, the reader who will not take the trouble of consulting the authors above referred to, need only turn to the Romish ritual for the 14th September where he will find, first the hymn,

"O crux ave spes unica
"In hâc triumphi gloriâ

of angels; about the fact of which, there is also no doubt. But it is alleged, that the veneration which is paid to them is not the same which is paid to God. This is, however, so subtle a distinction, that, in order to find a fit term for it, they are obliged, even in derogation of the authority which they ascribe to the Latin vulgate, to go to the Greek; from which they borrow the words duleia and latreia; the latter of which, they say, denotes the highest de-

" Piis adauge gratiam
" Reisque dele crimina."

What more could we ask of Christ himself than "an increase of "grace," and that "our sins should be blotted out?" Afterwards comes the following anthem, "Crux splendidior cunctis astris, "mundo celebris, hominibus multum amabilis, sanctior universis, "quæ sola fuisti digna portare talentum mundi, dulce lignum "dulces clavos dulcia ferens pondera, salva præsentem catervam in "tuis hodie laudibus congregatam!!" Here there can be no quibbling; this prayer for salvation is not only addressed to the cross; but that there may be no mistake a description of it is added which fixes it to be the material substantial cross which is adored. "Sweet wood, bearing the sweet nails, bearing the sweet burthen." And to this wood it is prayed that it would "save this company or "crowd gathered together to its praise!!" Horæ diurnæ breviarii, Romani. Antwerp, 1781, set forth with the authority of Clement XIII. and the licence and approbation of the ordinary. So this is no *obsolete* practice. Whether the above anthem is sung in our English chapels I know not, but the hymn is; and stands in the office for vespers, thus translated:

Hail cross! our hope, to thee we call
In this triumphant festival,
Grant to the just increase of grace,
And ev'ry sinner's crimes efface.

"Vespers," printed for Keating & Co. 1805.

gree of worship, that which is due to God alone; the former, that inferior sort which may be paid to saints and angels. They refine still further upon this, and having of late years found out many excellences in the Virgin Mary, which were not seen or acknowledged by the primitive church, they assign to her an intermediate sort of honour which they call hyperduleia. It were easy to shew that there is no such distinction between the terms, as used in the New Testament; but, indeed, the distinction itself seems in a degree unauthorised among them, as no mention is made of it in the Trent Catechism, which uses the words "colore" and "cultus" as indifferently applied to God or his saints. Still, it is insisted, that the saints are rightly called upon to intercede with God for us, and this is justified by the passages of Scripture in which we are bidden to pray for one another. It might be answered, first, that the direction is, that we should pray *for* one another, and not *to* one another; and that further, it has been rightly asked, Is there no difference between my simply asking my neighbour to pray to God for me, or my falling upon my knees before him or his picture, in a church, with all the devotion which makes a religious act to pray to him to procure me the divine favour? It should, indeed, be a sufficient answer, that for the one act, we have the full warrant of

Scripture, whereas we cannot perform the other without the direct violation of a divine commandment[14].

[14] The practice indeed is every way different from what it is represented to be; for commonly the prayer is put up to God that by the intercession or by the merits and intercession of such and such a saint he may grant us such and such blessings. Take St. Patrick for example, March 17th. "O God who was pleased to "send blessed Patrick, thy bishop and confessor, to preach thy "glory to the gentiles, grant that by his merits and intercession we "may through thy mercy be enabled to perform what thou com-"mandest." Again the collect for St. George's day, 23d of April. "O God who by the merits and prayers of blessed George, thy "martyr, fillest the hearts of thy people with joy, mercifully grant "that the blessings we ask in his name," (per eum) "we may hap-"pily obtain by thy grace," And observe that this stands also in the office of vespers for Sundays. Again January 18th, Festival of St. Peter's chair at Rome. Collect, "O God, who by de-"livering to thy blessed apostle Peter the keys of the kingdom of "heaven, didst give him the power of binding and loosing; grant "that by his intercession we may be freed from the bonds of our "sins, who livest." And still stronger what they call the secret. "May the intercession, we beseech thee, O Lord, of blessed Peter, "the apostle, render the prayers and offerings of thy church accep-"table to thee, that the mysteries we celebrate in his honour may "obtain for us the pardon of our sins." Sometimes the merits only are mentioned as in the day of St. Francis Xavier, Dec. 3d. "O God, who by the preaching and miracles of blessed Francis, "didst bring into thy church the people of the Indies; mercifully "grant that we may imitate his virtues whose glorious merits we "celebrate (veneramur) through." That for St. Cuthbert is singular. It is that "interveniente beato Cuthberto mereamur ad cul-"men virtutum pervenire." "That by his intervention we may "deserve to arrive at the summit of virtue." I will only add one more collect remarkable as well for the subject of it as for the terms in which it is conceived. It is that for the day of St. Thomas of Canterbury (Thomas a Becket) a gentleman who in these realms

But, besides, in praying for one another, we are doing an act of charity which is, or should

has greater honour paid to him, as will appear by the calendar, than St. Thomas the apostle or St. John the evangelist; for their feasts are only doubles of the second class, while his is a double of the first. It runs thus: "O God, in defence of whose church the glo- "rious prelate Thomas, fell by the swords of wicked men; grant "we beseech thee, that all who implore his assistance may find "comfort in the grant of their petitions, through." "Ut qui ejus "implorant auxilium petitionis suæ consequantur effectum per." Is this any thing like one man's asking another to pray to God for him? But take a specimen of the direct applications to them. In what is called the common of the apostles is sung the hymn, "Ex- "ultet orbis gaudiis," of which the second, third, and fourth stanzas are,

2 "Vos sæculorum judices,
"Et vera mundi lumina,
"Votis precamur cordium:
"Audite voces supplicum.

2 "O you true lights of human kind,
"And judges of the world design'd,
"To you our hearty vows we show,
"Hear your petitioners below.

3 "Qui templa cæli clauditis,
"Serasque verbo solvitis,
"Nos a reatu noxios
"Solvi jubete, quæsumus.

3 "The gates of heaven by your command
"Are fasten'd close, or open stand;
"Grant, we beseech you, then, that we
"From sinful slav'ry may be free.

4 "Præcepta quorum protinus
"Languor salusque sentiunt
"Sanate mentes languidas:
"Augete nos virtutibus.

4 "Sickness and health your pow'r obey;
"This comes, and that you drive away:
"Then from our souls all sickness chace,
"Let healing virtues take its place."

be mutual: the person who prays for his neighbour neither arrogates, nor has in fact attributed to him any superiority over the person for whom he prays. Whereas the Romanist, in addressing his saint, considers him as one of a superior order, who is not only out of all fear for his own salvation, but actually enjoys it: nay has, and had at the time of his death such a superabundance of merits, that they might be employed in behalf of those of his fellow-creatures whom he chooses to favour. Farther, in praying to a saint, the devotee cannot be sure that his patron hears him, unless he ascribe to him the attributes which belong only to God, ubiquity and omniscience; for unless he be every where, and knows all things, there can be no certainty that he hears or understands what is required of him. This is particularly the case as to mental prayer, which is, if I mistake not, put up equally to the saints as to God. And indeed here again we have another proof, and a very strong one, of the uncertainty of this infallible church. For this being a doctrine so highly injurious to God,

Here are both temporal and spiritual blessings prayed for by the congregation, as suppliants (supplices) to the apostles. What more could be prayed of Christ, or in what more humble way could he be approached? These specimens are taken from Vespers, or the Evening Office, printed by Keating and Co. 1805. Except the secret, which is taken from the Pocket Missal, printed by the same printer in 1796. For numerous other instances, equally strong, the reader has only to open either of those books.

we must not wonder if it gives occasion to many questions. Her doctors therefore are not agreed how the saints become acquainted with the prayers which are put up to them, whether by themselves, and by their own power; or whether they perceive them reflected in the divine effulgence which they contemplate; or, lastly, whether God makes a special revelation to them on every occasion as it occurs. There is a solemn trifling in all this, which, if the matter were of less importance, might be amusing. But I can only now add one observation. You cannot but be aware how by all this process God is, as it were, withdrawn from our sight, and other objects interposed, as more proper to fix our attention. Thus there are two distinct steps by which he is to be approached. First, to the image is given a worship, purely relative as they say, which terminates in the saint or the angel; and the saint or the angel is finally to transfer the prayer to the Lord of all. And this is all to be imposed upon men, because in that communion they choose to fancy, contrary to the most express declarations of Scripture, that the Almighty is not directly accessible, or at least that he prefers being approached through many intercessors. And so fond are they of this idea, that in one of their collects they pray that "the "number of their intercessors may be multi-

" plied[15]." Does not this strongly bring to mind that text of St. Paul, in which he so expressly condemns and exposes the falsehood and folly upon which this practice is founded, and which applies to so many corruptions of the Romish church. He cautions the Colossians not to be beguiled with a " voluntary humility and wor- " shipping of angels;" " which things," he says, " have a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and " humility, and neglecting of the body; not in " any honour to the satisfying of the flesh*."

I have treated this violation of God's commandments as if it was really no more than it pretended to be. Even then it must be taken to be a most signal derogation from the honour of Christ, as introducing such a number of intercessors, where the gospel has revealed to us only one Mediator, only one who " having suffered for us, " ever liveth to make intercession for us." It is in vain that here again our adversaries make their distinctions between a mediator of redemp-

[15]. Collect for All Saints'-day, " Omnipotens et sempiterne " Deus, qui nos omnium sanctorum tuorum merita sub unâ tri- " buisti celebritate venerari; quæsumus ut desideratam nobis tuæ " propitiationis abundantiam multiplicatis intercessoribus largiaris. " Per," &c. " Our intercessors being multiplied," as it stands in the Primer published in 1780. In the Missal and Vespers published in 1796 and 1805, it is translated, " since we have so many peti- " tioners in our behalf." This is not the only instance in which I find the Latin very much softened down in the later translations.

* Col. ii. 23.

tion and a mediator of intercession: for where is such a distinction to be found? Did not God, by the very act of sending down his Son upon earth declare, in the most pointed manner, that this was a work to which no human creature was equal, and in which no mere man could be a sharer?

But the truth is, that the devotion which is paid to the saints in the Romish church goes much farther. The members of her communion call upon their saints not merely to pray for them, but to "protect them," "to give them "all manner of assistance," to "bring them to "heaven," and "save them from hell[16]." Their

[16]. This is indeed but according to the directions of the Council of Trent, who say that we are to recur to the help and assistance of the saints, as well as to their prayers. Conc. Trid. Sess. 23. de Invocatione, &c. I have already given a specimen in a former note, to which I will now add the hymn on St. John the Baptist's day, where the people are taught to call themselves his servants, "famuli," and to beseech him to cleanse their "lips from the pollution of "guilt, in order that they may sing his wonderful works."

"Ut queant laxis resonare fibris
"Mira gestorum famuli tuorum
"Solve polluti labii reatum
Sancte Joannes."

This is marvellously softened in the translation. See Vespers, p. 266.

That we with tuneful notes may sound
Thy life, with signal wonders crown'd;
Great Baptist, let no sinful stain
Our lives with discord stain.

addresses to the Virgin Mary, in particular, exceed almost all that can be conceived. They address her in a manner which is nothing less than blasphemous; they bid her use her right as a mother, and in that character prevail upon, if not command her son. "Jure matris impera "redemptori," was once, if it be not still, standing in their offices. They beseech her to "loose "the bands of the guilty," to "give light to the "blind," to "drive away evils," to "receive her "votaries, and support them in the hour of "death." Thousands indeed there are, and have always been, who daily commit themselves to her, and not to God. The same thing happens with respect to other saints[17].

They are also the "famuli" servants of St. Joachim. "Famulis "confer salutis opera." See Missal, p. 445. In the feast of St. Richard, April 3d, they pray that by his intercession they may attain to "the glory of eternal bliss." Dec. 6th, that by the merits of St. Nicholas they may be "delivered from the flames of hell," a gehennæ incendiis. In the Vespers this is translated "from "eternal flames." July 6th, that by the merits of St. Peter and St. Paul they may "obtain a glorious eternity." And N. B. this prayer is in the common of Vespers for Sundays.

[17] See Wake's Defence of the Exposition of the Docrine of the Church of England in Preserv. against Popery, tit. ix. p. 60, and the other treatises in the same book. In the common office for her we have the hymn "Ave Maris stella," which contains the following petitions:—(Vespers, p. 121.)

Solve vincla reis	The sinners' bonds unbind,
Profer lumen cæcis	Our evils drive away;
Mala nostra pelle	Bring light unto the blind,
Bona cuncta posce.	For grace and blessings pray.

The wickedness of all this will appear aggravated, if we consider in how many ways God

Monstra te esse matrem	Thyself a mother shew;
Sumat per te preces	May he receive thy prayer,
Qui pro nobis natus	Who for the debts we owe
Tulit esse tuus.	From thee would breathe our air.

In the office of Matins in Advent is the blessing, "Nos cum "prole piâ benedicat virgo Maria;" which junction of the two names in this way must shock every true Christian. "May the "Virgin Mary, with her pious son, bless us." Primer, p. 75. At p. 99, we have the hymn where she is called upon to "protect "us at the hour of death," and she is called "mother of grace, "mother of mercy." "Mater gratiæ, mater misericordiæ, tu nos "ab noste protege et horâ mortis suscipe." At p. 290, I find this recommendation to her, "O holy Mary, I recommend myself, my "soul, and body, to thy blessed trust and singular custody, and "into the bosom of thy mercy, this day and daily, and at the hour "of my death; and I commend to thee all my hope and com-"fort, all my distresses and miseries, my life, and the end thereof; "that by thy most holy intercession and merits all my works may "be directed and disposed according to thine and thy son's will. "Amen." My readers will by this time be both wearied and disgusted, but I must add the prayer which immediately follows:— "O Mary, mother of God, and gracious virgin, the true com-"forter of all afflicted persons crying to thee: by that great joy "wherewith thou wert comforted when thou didst know our Lord "Jesus was gloriously risen from the dead; be a comfort to my "soul, and vouchsafe to help me with thine, and God's only be-"gotten son, in that last day, when I shall rise again with body "and soul, and shall give account of all my actions; to the end "that I may be able by thee, O pious mother and virgin, to avoid "the sentence of perpetual damnation, and happily come to eternal "joys with all the elect of God. Amen." It must be remembered, that it is not to what might be disclaimed as obsolete canons, or mere opinions of the schools (not to any fooleries of a St. Buonaventure, or Cardinal Bona) that I am referring the reader, but to what is the actual and daily practice of the Romanists in these kingdoms. I can add even the express recommendation of one of

has declared himself against such corruptions. You may remember that when Moses died, his body was not to be found: and this, as it is well understood, was done in mercy, lest the Israelites should, from the great benefits of which he had been the instrument to them, have been led to worship his remains, or in any other way to pay him adoration. It is striking to see how God appears to have pursued a similar course with respect to the first publishers of the New Testament. Of the Virgin Mary we know absolutely nothing after the ascension of our Saviour, except that she was at one time with the disciples at Jerusalem. And even while our Saviour was upon earth, so far was he from treating her with any such distinction as might lead to this idolatry, that all his addresses to her seem directed to prevent even the idea of it from being entertained. "Woman," said he, on one occasion, "what have I to do with thee?" At another time, when told that his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him, his answer was, "Who is my mother, and

their bishops. In his late Pastoral Letter, Dr. Milner recommends to his clergy "a special devotion to the Virgin Mary, as recommended in the Observanda;" which passage in the Observanda is as follows:—"Plurimum proderit se suosque omnes sub Deiparæ patriocinio constituere." "It will be highly profitable to place ourselves, and our relations and friends, under the patronage of the mother of God." Pastoral Letter, by John, Bishop of Castaballa, p. xxviii. published by Keating and Co.

"who are my brethren?" And to put this matter beyond a doubt, he stretched forth his hand to his disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and "my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will "of my father which is in heaven, the same is "my brother, and sister, and mother." Could our Lord in more express terms condemn by anticipation all this blasphemous worship of the Virgin? Going on to others, we may observe that of Joseph, her husband, not a word is said. We are left to collect that he died before our Lady only from what passed at the foot of the cross[18]. The same remark applies to the apos-

[18]. Yet this man, very late in the 14th century, and not before, for certain curious reasons alleged, has all at once started up the greatest of all saints except the Virgin Mary. "We are not to "discourse of St. Joseph in the same dialect as when we mention "other saints." Office of St. Joseph, printed for Keating and Co. 1800. In the same book the votary is directed to offer himself to the saint in the following terms:—"I firmly resolve and purpose "never to forsake you; and never to say or do, nor even to suffer "any under my charge to say or do any thing against your honour: "receive me therefore for your perpetual servant, and recommend "me to the constant protection of Mary, your dearest spouse, and "to the everlasting mercies of Jesus, my saviour. Assist me in all "the actions of my life, all which I now offer to the everlasting "glory of Jesus and Mary, as well as your own." (If this be not blasphemy and idolatry, I must confess myself ignorant of the meaning of those terms.) "Never, therefore, forsake me, and "whatsoever grace you see most necessary and profitable to me, ob-"tain it for me now, and at the hour of death, &c." Ib. pp. 113, 114. In the meditations subjoined, it is not only taken for granted that Joseph was a virgin, but proved in a very curious way that he made the vow of virginity very early in life. "Seeing St.

tles. Of them nothing is told us in scripture but what is absolutely necessary for the proper publication of the gospel. Not a word is added for the purpose of exciting veneration, or even of gratifying curiosity. Of only one apostle the death is related: and that of Peter is merely intimated in the way of warning and of prophecy. Of the rest of the twelve we have literally nothing; nor is it placed beyond a doubt whether it was at Rome that Peter suffered, or even whether he was ever there. And must we not after this wonder, nay be shocked, to see how the gracious purpose of God (for so I must think it) obviously manifested in the suppression of all that related to men so extraordinary, and so worthy to be had in remembrance, has been defeated, nay, turned to a directly contrary end, made the occasion of inventing a thousand lies and forgeries? Could we reasonably have expected that upon such a foundation there would have been erected the worship not only of those who were real and acknowledged saints, who undoubtedly were inspired by God, but of those who had no possible pretensions to such honour, who were not only weak

" Mary Magdalen de Pazzi made a vow of perpetual virginity at ten " years of age, probably our angelical patriarch offered this ines- " timable treasure at a more early period!!" And these again I say are not the reveries of the tenth century, but the spiritual food with which the good Catholics of England are fed at this day!!!

and fallible, but actually in error, actually deceived, as well as deceiving, and in too many instances wicked and designing impostors? The wonder will only cease when it is lost in sentiments of indignation and abhorrence; when we perceive that the whole originated in, and acquired consistence from a system of covetousness and ambition, pursued, without intermission, at the expence of all true piety and devotion.

For that it was indeed with a view to the offerings which should be made at the shrines of those false Gods, to the price at which their intercession should be purchased, that the saints were thus by the church of Rome exalted, we cannot but pronounce as we come lastly to consider that other instance in which her idolatry is so signally displayed, and the most solemn act of religion prostituted to the purposes of worldly gain. The gross abuses which take place in the celebration of the mass, the strange, and I may say horrible doctrine of transubstantiation which it involves, would be less shocking if they had been the mere effect of speculative error, and had not, on the contrary, grown up and been adopted under the influence of the foulest avarice and the most insatiable lust of power. It would never have been contended that at the solemnization of the eucharist the bread and wine actually become the

proper body and blood of Christ, so as even no longer to retain any particle of their original elements, if it had not been perceived that the character of the priest would by this means be highly exalted and magnified; that he must become a being of particular holiness in the eyes of his fellow creatures, if it was believed that he had the gift of working so astonishing a miracle; that to him was entrusted the power of making the God that was to be eaten and worshipped[19]. Again, the necessity of repeating the actual sacrifice of Christ; the profitableness of it to the dead as well as to the living; the belief that this profit might be acquired for others by the mere act of the priest officiating by himself; all these would never have become articles of faith, if it had not been declared at the same time that the benefit, great as it was, might be purchased for money; if, independent of the larger donations with which the piety of wealthier votaries might enrich the church, it had not been settled that masses for the dead as well as for the

[19] One great abuse founded on this was the robbing of the temporal sovereign of his superiority over the lands which were held by the clergy. Homage was not to be paid by them as by the laity, because forsooth "it was execrable that pure hands, which "could create God, and could offer him up as a sacrifice for the "salvation of mankind, should be put in this humiliating manner "between profane hands, &c" Hume's Hist. of England, Vol. i. p. 304.

living might be contracted for at stipulated prices.

There is something in this traffic so abominable and disgusting, something which so directly tends to debase in the eyes of the most ignorant the very nature of a sacrament, that reason and piety revolt alike at the idea. I need the less insist upon the impiety as well as absurdity of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Volumes have been written on the question: but it lies within a small compass, and is obvious to every understanding. You need not surely be reminded that by the same sort of reasoning which makes the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ in substance and in specie, our Lord while upon earth must be taken to have been literally a way to walk over, a vine in which the believers were also literally engrafted, and a lamb with all the properties of that creature, although his appearance to the sight was ever so different from all this. You can be at no loss, when told that transubstantiation is a miracle, to answer that it is directly contrary to every idea which is given us of a miracle; that a miracle appeals to the senses, but this directly contradicts them. When you are told that the words of our Lord "this is my body," and "this is my blood," are plain words, you may answer with a learned prelate of our church,

" very plain indeed, for they are a very plain " figure[20]."

[20] Archbishop Sharpe. 'And I am very willing to leave the matter upon this issue, though Dr. Milner in his late pamphlet is so confident upon this point. I do still " think that a simple up- " right man, reading the institution of the blessed sacrament in " the gospel," (that is our Lord's taking the bread into his hands and saying,) "Take, eat, this is my body," would *not* conceive that bread to be the real and proper body, in substance, of the man or being by whom it was so held; more especially when he recollected that when the " promise of it," (as it is here called by Dr. Milner) was given, that is, when as related in John vi. 55, our Lord said among other things, " my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is " drink indeed," and that they which should eat his body and drink his blood should have eternal life: that very same saviour added, upon the disciples murmuring at this as a hard saying, (v. 63) " It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, " the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." When too St. Paul (cited by Dr. Milner himself only two pages before) has told us that " the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth " life." I say, that even without these strong authorities, a simple upright man would suppose that the eating of Christ there mentioned, was only spoken in a spiritual and figurative sense. See Inquiry into certain Vulgar Opinions, &c. pp. 191, 2. But Dr. Milner has made a greater discovery, he has brought such a testimony of the faith of our church in the ninth century, as induces him to " defy the subtilty of the most disingenuous contro- " vertist," to give it any other meaning than what he has assigned. It is from Bede, whom I have not at hand, and whom not being able therefore to collate or to see what precedes or what follows, I receive not without a protestation at the hands of Dr. Milner, for reasons which I have repeatedly shewn and shall again shew; yet for argument's sake I take him as cited. The passage is this, (See Inquiry, &c. p. 148) and I say it no more proves transubstantiation than it proves the transmutation of metals: for the only thing which has caught Dr. Milner is that it contains the word trans-

One more argument only I shall allege, because it confirms what I have said before of the

fertur (printed by him in capitals) as if because it begins with the same syllable as transubstantiation it must have the same meaning. In fact Bede says no more than what any orthodox member of our church might now say. "Lavat nos (Christus) quotidie a peccatis "nostris in sanguine suo cum ejusdem beatæ passionis memoria ad "altare replicatur, cum panis et vini creatura in sacramentum car- "nis et sanguinis ejus TRANSFERTUR: Sicque corpus et san- "guis illius non infidelium manibus ad perniciem ipsorum funditur "et occiditur, sed fidelium ore suam sumitur ad salutem." I will now give a TRANSLATION (this word also begins with trans) of the passage and I defy any reasonable man to understand it as Dr. Milner chooses to do. "Christ washes us from our sins every day "in his blood, when the memory of his blessed passion is renewed "at the altar, when the creature of bread and wine is transferred" (or changed) "into the sacrament of his body and blood; and so "his body and blood is not shed and slain by the hands of infidels "to their destruction, but taken by the mouth of the faithful to "their salvation." Every member of this sentence negatives the idea of transubstantiation. The celebration of the eucharist is the "renewal of the memory of our Lord's passion:" the "change or "transfer" of the bread and wine, is not into his body and blood, but "into the sacrament of his body and blood;" and lastly, he is not slain or his blood shed, but only "taken to salvation." Is this such a change of substance as the Papists plead for? Our church, as Dr. Milner knows, believes a real, but a sacramental presence. Nay, she prays that "we may so eat the flesh of Christ and drink "his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, "and our souls washed through his most precious blood," and in the very prayer of consecration it is asked of God that we "receiv- "ing these his creatures of bread and wine, according to our Sa- "viour Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and "passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood." And does our church believe transubstantiation? It believes it as much as it did in Bede's time. For further proof of which let the reader only turn to Collier's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. i. p. 294,

uncertainty and doubt which is so discernible at times in this certain and infallible church. You may remember the chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ is so insisted upon and its superiority over the offerings of the old law is shewn from its needing no repetition. "Christ," says the apostle, "by his own blood entered "once into the holy place, having obtained "eternal redemption for us." Of course there was no need that he should offer himself more than once. "Nor yet," says the apostle, "that "he should offer himself often, as the high "priest entereth every year into the holy place "with blood of others (for then must he often "have suffered from the foundation of the "world) but now once in the end of the "world hath he appeared to put away sin by "the sacrifice of himself." I need not point out to you how directly this contradicts their notion of Christ's sacrifice in the mass; but

where he will see her faith in that respect demonstrated to have been even in the 10th century what it is now. Indeed it was some time after Bede that the doctrine was first agitated by Radbert; who was, as I have had occasion to mention in my next sermon, immediately answered by Bertramn (or Ratramn) Rabanus Maurus and Johannes Scotus; and this even by command of the Emperor Charles. Bertramn's book which is extant and prohibited in the Index expurgatorius is a well known proof how much this tenet was considered as a novelty. As little ground is there for what Dr. M. says of the doctrine of Chrysostom and the Greek church, in the same place.

what I would have you further observe is that clearly the suffering of the victim is inseparable from every sacrifice. Here indeed they are taken for one and the same thing. But then the question arises, How does Christ suffer in the mass? Is his body really eaten? Our adversaries hardly venture to say that. But how else does the victim suffer or is destroyed? One of their great doctors says that by the pressing of the teeth the body of Christ loses not its natural but its sacramental essence; which to my apprehension goes a great way towards reducing the matter to what archbishop Sharpe calls "a plain "figure," and nothing else. But here again another question arises among them as to what is the sacrificial act. *When* does the sacrifice take place? Some say at the oblation of the elements, some say at the consecration, others at the breaking or mixing of them, and others lastly, at the eating or consumption of them. These are only some of their doubts; and infinite are the contradictions with which the discussion of them is involved. Meanwhile the victim about which they are so divided is lifted up, carried about in procession and worshipped; and often so far from being destroyed in the proper sense of sacrifice, is reserved and made subject to a thousand accidents, nay to be devoured, as has been confessedly the case, by dogs, and by rats and mice.

But the difficulty or the mischief does not stop here. There is one tenet behind so extraordinary and absurd, as well as wicked, that one can hardly conceive how it could have been established. It bears particularly upon this point of idolatry, since it makes it utterly impossible for any man to be sure that he is not worshipping plain bread and wine. In their great eagerness to exalt the character of the priest, and to invest him with the highest possible authority in the execution of his office, the later popish councils have decreed that the intention of the priest is necessary to the validity of a sacrament: that is, that the priest must mean to do what he is supposed to do, he must really intend to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, or no change whatever takes place. If through inattention, through perverseness, through malice, he does not choose that grace should be conveyed to the partakers of the host, they not only receive no benefit whatever, but in kneeling and adoring the wafer, they are paying religious worship to a mere composition of flour and water. It is, therefore, as I said before, impossible for any man who performs this act of adoration, unless he could read the heart of the priest, to be sure that he is not guilty of idolatry. But there is still further room for doubt and hesitation. For as this doctrine extends to orders and to baptism

as well as to the mass, it follows also that if the bishop who ordained the priest had no intention of conferring orders, if the minister who officiated at his baptism had no intention of admitting him into the church of Christ, he is no lawful priest, and none of his acts can have any efficacy, nor can confer the least particle of spiritual grace, or the most insignificant privilege. And this, it must be further observed, goes back to every bishop and every priest from the days of the apostles. If in any one instance the intention was wanting, the chain is broken, and all those whose admission into the church is connected with the act which is thus defective are in fact no Christians. In short, upon their principle, every bishop and every priest, nay every saint of their church may be no better than heathens and publicans.

The folly as well as impudence of this doctrine is so alarming, it is such a loosening of the foundations of the church, so suicidal, that one can only refer it to that strong delusion mentioned in scripture, which causes men to "believe a lie;" which leads them to overlook the most false consequences, in the pursuit of a present, though ever so unsubstantial an advantage.

Thus have I brought to a close what I meant to say upon the first head of the corruptions prevailing in the Romish church; and you can-

not but see how even by that our separation from her might be fully justified. From the first to the last the scriptures are uniform in representing idolatry as the grossest act of rebellion against God. He deigns to consider himself as the husband of his church. And every other act of worship to any other being, nay, every such act paid even to him in any other manner than he warrants, is stigmatized as adultery and whoredom. He represents himself as a "jealous" God, that we may understand (for such is the nature of jealousy) that not only every approach to such a crime, but the very suspicion of it in the wife whom he hath chosen is what he will not endure. But as you have also seen the church of Rome is not only a prostitute, but a prostitute for hire. Not only she prefers a "form" before the "power" of godliness; but as St. Paul says elsewhere, supposes "gain to "be godliness*." Indeed when you see for what base ends the worship of God is thus by her priests and rulers profaned, what words can we apply to them more justly than those of our Lord spoken to other money changers, far less criminal than these, "It is written my house "shall be called a house of prayer, but *ye have* "*made it a den of thieves.*†."

* 1 Tim. vi. 5. † Matt. xxi. 13.

SERMON VI.

MARK vii. 7.

In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

IN the beginning of my last discourse I observed upon the difficulty which must be felt by every infidel or impostor in opposing the true religion, unless he be prepared with other doctrines by which he may divert and engage the attention of men, and satisfy that propensity to the divine worship which is so deeply rooted in the human mind: I may add now that the sort of doctrine which is thus made to supply the place of God's word, can of course only

be that which is pointed out in the text. And this affords another proof of the truth of what has been more than once observed, that error in all ages is substantially the same. For you cannot be ignorant that the practice which our Saviour thus reproves in the pharisees and hypocrites of his day, is the principal and most powerful engine employed at all times by the church of Rome, and by force of which she has been enabled to support her authority, and give currency to her peculiar tenets. The doctors of modern days have but trod the same path as the rabbis of old; both saw their advantage and pursued it; and in both cases but too successfully, "The word of God was made "of none effect by their traditions*." In what way indeed could any colour have been given to the abominations which in my last discourse I pointed out, how could the worship of images and of relics, or the invocation of saints ever have become accredited but by devising such explanations and glosses, and bringing forward such opinions of men as should quite put out of sight the divine commandments in which they were so expressly prohibited.

Such is the case with the first class of corruptions adopted by the Romish church, nor shall we find those which follow at all less contradictory to the words of scripture, or differently

* Matt. xv. 6.

supported. They stand indeed like the others upon no better or more specious foundation than the inventions of men.

I come then, as next in order, to that class of corrupt doctrine by which she derogates from the sufficiency of our Lord's atonement; and this by the introduction of other intercessors, and her whole system of merits as applied to the living as well as the dead. And to any man who has duly considered the nature of our redemption, who feels as he ought all that is due to our great Lord and Saviour, this species of error will not appear in any degree less pernicious than the first. It will also be found materially connected with it. And indeed, according to the observation already made, as it is in the nature of truth that all its parts should harmonize together and support one another; so shall we find the different species of error, more especially in religious matters, so naturally to run into each other, to be so closely entwined and interwoven that it is hardly possible to consider any one of them without some of the others coming also into discussion. Thus the worship of the saints, and of course of their images and relics, forces itself naturally upon us, when coming to consider the Romish doctrine of merits. By their merits it is that the saints are represented as having raised themselves to that eminence, from which they are able to give to

their votaries assistance and protection. Whatever therefore of honour or of worship may be paid to them, becomes on that account doubly abominable and impious. It is idolatry; and idolatry practiced upon grounds which cannot but most immediately derogate from the glory of him who is in scripture declared to be our only Redeemer and Protector, the only Being who is "mighty to save*." And this, as I have before observed, would be the case if the veneration which is paid to saints, and the trust which is reposed in them, were ever so moderate and kept within ever such narrow bounds; if nothing had taken place of that which I have already pointed out, and which we know to have been the fact ever since saints were first worshipped; that infinitely more and more earnest supplications are and have been by their worshippers put up to them than to Christ or the Father[1]. But even this is not all; there is

* Isaiah lxiii. 1.

[1] The reader may recollect what has been adduced in some of the notes to the last sermon, particularly notes [16], [17] & [18]. Take another specimen or two: first, of the famous St. Francis, of Assisi. "He had a singular devotion to the mother of God (whom he "chose for the special patroness of his order) and in her honour "he fasted from the feast of SS. Peter and Paul to that of her as-"sumption. After this festival he fasted forty days and prayed "much, out of devotion to the angels, especially the archangel "Michael; and at All saints he fasted other forty days. Under the "name of these lents he spent almost the whole year in fasting and

yet one circumstance remaining behind to fill up the measure of abomination. In fact, had

" prayer, &c." Butler's Lives of the Saints, Vol. iv. p. 74. that is in fact in devotions to the honour of saints and angels. Little therefore could be left for God. In the manner of performing " the novena or nine days devotion to St. Francis Xavier," (sold by Keating and Co.) we are directed to be "always endeavouring to " repose an entire confidence in the merits of this apostle," &c. p. 394. And at the end is a prayer to him concluding in these words, " as thou art favourable and loving to all persons, be so also " to me, though an unworthy sinner. Grant me this request to " the glory of God and to thy own honour. Amen." I am informed from very good authority, that it is common at Naples for the people to call upon Christ to pray for them to St. Januarius. " Jesu Maria prega per me a san Gennaro." There will be less difficulty in believing this if we consider the example very lately set by the head of that church. Upon his return from France in the year 1805, the pope held a secret consistory in which on the 26th of June, he delivered an allocution giving an account of what he had done. And he " congratulates himself in being able to com- " municate with them," (the consistory) " that day so near the " solemn festival of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, in order that " after having described the benefits he has experienced, chiefly by " their holy assistance, they may proceed to celebrate the memory " of those glorious martyrs, with a piety the more ardent and with " hearts overflowing with gratitude." In the end he says, "it " behoves them to prostrate themselves at the throne of the author " of these benefits, and humbly to supplicate him, through the in- " tercession of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul," &c. See Cobbett's Pol. Reg. Vol. viii. p. 139. If the reader will examine the miracles which are pretended to have taken place in these latter times, he will almost invariably find them ascribed not to any prayer to God, but to some invocation of a particular saint, who is to be honoured thereby. See Butler's Lives of the Saints, passim. I shall only further subjoin the well known account of the offerings in the church of Canterbury just before the reformation mentioned in Burnet and other writers, as made at the three great altars. " The

the doctrine gone no further, it would but imperfectly have served the ends which the popes had in view. Had men simply been told that by their own endeavours the saints had raised themselves to the immediate enjoyment of the beatific vision, and the conclusion been laid before them which resulted from this, that the same path was open to all who would make the same exertions, this would not have tended sufficiently of itself to advance the temporal interests of the church: nay, by teaching the efficacy of a man's own endeavours, it might have raised in the catechumens ideas of independence, or have led them at least to put confidence in themselves and not in her. Care indeed was taken, as hereafter will be seen, that the merits by which this privilege was to be obtained, should be of such a nature as must at any rate contribute greatly to her support; but even with that, had no other consequence been attached to it, the doctrine would have been comparatively barren and unproductive. It was therefore necessary to resort to other devices, and by novel and arbitrary distinctions

"one was to Christ, the other to the virgin and the third to St. "Thomas. In one year there was offered at Christ's altar 3l. 2s. 6d. "at the virgin's altar, 63l. 5s. 6d. But at St. Thomas's altar, "832l. 12s. 3d. But the next year the odds grew greater for there "was not a penny offered at Christ's altar, and at the virgin's only "4l. 1s. 8d. But at St. Thomas's, 954l. 6s. 8d." Hist. of Ref. i. 244.

to set up new modes of satisfaction and atonement; that thus the minds of men might be weaned from fixing their thoughts exclusively and entirely, as they ought, on the merits of our Lord; that they might thus be brought down from heaven to earth; from the pure and spiritual faith in a divine Saviour, to a reliance on human protectors, on ceremonies both visible and gross.

The Scriptures indeed had spoken but too plainly on this head. It was so expressly laid down in them that Christ, by his death, had become "the author of eternal salvation*;" that "he hath delivered us from the wrath to "come†; that "there is none other name under "heaven by whom we may be saved‡." All these, and numberless other passages, were so strong and positive, that directly to oppose them would have been too flagrant rebellion, and some evasion was to be found. This was hit upon by means of that intermediate state, concerning which so little is declared in Scripture, that the most pious and learned men have differed upon the subject. There were also doubts and reveries, nay, and declared heresies, of some of the ancient fathers, which might easily be, as they were in fact made subservient to any system which might be adoped*. Here there was a

* Heb. v. 9. † 1 Thess. i. 10. ‡ Acts, iv. 12.

* Origen's, for example, which the Romanists scruple not to cite

field which, being almost entirely left open to the imagination, might well be employed for such purposes as fraud should devise, and credulity adopt. Accordingly, while the one sacrifice of Christ was allowed to be indeed efficacious for the salvation of all the faithful, that is, of those who died in communion, and having made their peace with the church, it was taught that this salvation was restricted to redemption from the torments of eternal damnation. There was still (as mankind were led to believe) another satisfaction to be made. God, it was asserted, had indeed promised the final remission of sins through Christ, but had reserved to himself the right of inflicting temporal punishment, even for the sins which were thus remitted. This temporal punishment was to consist, in the first place, of sufferings and mortifications of all sorts in this life; but for those who had not passed through this ordeal, and were not sufficiently purged, there was ordained a place of torment, where their souls might be detained for a longer or a shorter time, according to the de-

and rely upon when it suits their purpose. See Archbishop Wake's Discourse upon Purgatory, Pres. against Popery, tit. viii. ch. vi. See also the Discourse upon praying for the Dead, ib. ch. vii. in which is shewn the weakness of their argument, built on the ancients being used to pray for the dead; since they prayed for all the saints, and even the Virgin Mary; which alone would overturn all their system of the boasted merits of their great intercessors and protectors.

gree of this sort of satisfaction which might be required in their particular case. This place was, after some time, called by the well known name of purgatory.

In this doctrine it could not, and it cannot be denied, that there is something not only revolting in itself, but directly contrary to all the ideas which are inculcated in Scripture respecting the divine mercy, and our redemption through Christ. For to be told that we are "*freely*" justified through him, that by him we are no longer "children of wrath;" and yet to be told that even those who are admitted to the benefits of his passion, who are enrolled in the number of the faithful, are notwithstanding bound to go through a course of sufferings, little, if at all inferior in intenseness, to those which are destined for the reprobates, having all the horrors of hell except its duration; this is such a contradiction as, thus nakedly considered, must not only shock the reason of the sober Christian, but even alarm the feelings of the credulous and superstitious.

This, therefore, as the system was matured, came very soon to be explained, as being a matter of mere terror, rather than any thing else. It was at least, as men were told, such a penalty as might be got rid of, without personal inconvenience, by any man who would only give himself up to the guidance of the church. She had

in her care provided a store, out of which every man might be fully supplied, if he would but pay a sufficient price. She had discovered that, although the merits of Christ, as applied by himself, and, in the first instance, do not redeem the souls of the faithful out of purgatory; yet, as applied by his priests, and as offered up in the mass, they have all the efficacy which is required. That is, our Lord, for the mere purpose of magnifying and enriching the ministers of his sacraments, must have kept back some part of the all-sufficiency of his atonement, in order that in due season, and for good considerations, the part so reserved might be dealt out for the particular profit of those whom the church should appoint for that purpose.

A more profligate and impudent insult upon the majesty of our Lord can hardly be conceived. It is however surpassed by what follows. For, not content thus to parcel out and to retail, as it were, the benefit of our redemption by Christ himself, they have gone to that length of impiety as to say that, that which, in the first instance, the sufferings of Christ do not effect, to the full and entire remission of any man's sins, may also be made up by the merits of his saints. And, to this end, they imagined that most presumptuous and unscriptural tenet of works of supererogation. According to this, in opposition to the whole scheme of our re-

demption, as made known from the days of Adam down to those of St. John, in the teeth of so many declarations of the saints themselves, they hold that, not only the saints have done so much as entitles them to receive, in strict justice, the rewards of eternal life, but that their good works have been so abundant, and so much beyond what was required of them, that out of that abundance they are enabled to supply the deficiencies of others. Thus it is in fact declared that it is not Christ only that suffered for sinners; but that this is an honour which is shared by the martyrs and confessors, whose sufferings or good works, for in this instance the terms are synonimous, are available, if not for the forgiveness of sins, yet for the remission of that penalty which is the consequence of sin. And thus, lest, I suppose, the merits of Christ should not prove sufficient, the merits of the saints are added, and altogether form that treasure, or store, the dispensation of which is committed to the church[a].

Such is the short history of indulgences, which are founded on this supposed stock of

[a] See Rheims Testament, note upon 2 Cor. ii. 10. "Whereupon "we inferre most assuredly, that the satisfactorie and penal workes "of holy saints, suffered in this life, be communicable and applicable to the use of other faithful men, their fellow-workers in "our Lord, and to be dispensed according to every man's necessitie "and deserving, by them whom Christ hath constituted over his "familie, and hath made the dispensers of his treasures."

superabundant works, and overflowing grace; and which, although now such a settled point of doctrine in the church of Rome, were not even thought of before the era of the crusades. At that time the piety of the faithful requiring some extraordinary incentives, this species of rewards was first held out, in order to animate the courage, and revive the zeal of the kings and princes who were called upon to head their armies against the infidel possessors of the holy land. It was also, by a transition quite natural in that communion from the enemies of Christ to the enemies of the church, further extended to those who took up the cross against the heretics of those days; the whole influence of the church being thus brought to bear upon all those who opposed the power, or the doctrines of the popes. The credit of these wares being thus established, they were not suffered to fall to the ground; but they were brought forward as powerful auxiliaries upon every occasion, whenever the see of Rome stood in need of extraordinary support, or its coffers required to be replenished[4]. They came at last to be publicly put up to sale, and this in so barefaced and scandalous a manner, that, as you well know, it was from the indignation excited by this very abuse, more than any other, that the Reformation re-

[4] Those which are called general indulgences did not take place till the time of Boniface the 8th, about the end of the 13th century;

ceived its first and most decided impulse. Much as they may, since that time, have lost of their repute, however necessary it may have been found to proceed with more caution and reserve in the dispensing of them, yet the practice still subsists. To this day they form a part of the means by which the pope retains his influence, and exercises his authority over the members of his communion, wherever dispersed; and a certain and allotted portion of them figures in the directories, and other books, which are printed for the information and edification of the Roman Catholics in this country. They are, I will add, still defended by the pens of their bishops, and maintained to be full of spiritual profit and comfort to all Christians[s].

I have purposely abstained, as may have been observed, from adverting with any particularity to the grounds upon which these errors have been established. I have entered into none of the distinctions by which, in the hands of the schoolmen, they were supported; the merits "de congruo," and the merits "de condigno," or the "opus operatum." I have forborne to do this, both because in any degree to have at-

[s] See the Laity's Directory, a Roman Catholic calendar, published by authority: and Dr. Milner's Pastoral Letter, p. viii. See also, in Dr. Hales's State of the Modern Church of Rome, an account of the cargoes of them which the King of Spain takes from his holiness, and retails to his subjects in America. The instance there produced is of the years 1782 and 1783, pp. 182 and 218.

tempted it might have led me too far; and also for that much more satisfactory reason, that these points have been so ably and so fully treated by a learned Gentleman, who but lately preceded me in these lectures, that no man who wishes for information upon the subject need now be at a loss where to go[6]. My business indeed, as I have before mentioned, is not to give a detailed history of such tenets, but shortly to point them out, and to shew their utter opposition to, and inconsistency with the true faith of Christ. It may be sufficient to assert, that by the popes, and their adherents, nothing has been omitted or disregarded, nothing has been considered as trivial or unimportant, which could in any way be made to favour their doctrines or pretensions. Whatever of subtle refinement had been imagined by the schoolmen in their curiously idle researches, or advanced by them in the heat of argument, whatever hasty or loose opinions may have been unguardedly thrown out by the fathers, whatever has occurred among the vulgar, nay, even every mistaken or inaccurate passage in their versions of the divine oracles, which could be made to bear upon the points in question, has

[6] Dr Richard Laurence, who appears to have given the deathblow to that allegation, with so much positiveness advanced by certain sectaries, both in and out of the church, that the compilers of our articles understood them in a Calvinistic sense.

by them been carefully collected, raised to importance, and turned to account. This is particularly visible in their doctrine of the sacraments; two of which, more especially, stand upon hardly any better foundation than the language of that translation of the Bible, which is commonly called the Vulgate, and which for that very reason they have adopted in preference to the originals. I mean the sacraments, as they term it, of marriage and of penance. The first they founded upon that expression of St. Paul, where he terms it a mystery; by the Vulgate rendered "sacramentum[7]." Of the second, that

[7] Ephes. v. 32. Yet is this so weak a foundation, that the annotators of the Rheims Testament are fain, in some sort, to give it up, and to rest themselves upon the general sense of the passage; as it is echoed by some of the fathers, "Thus," they say, we "gather that matrimonie is a sacrament; and not of the Greek "word mysterie only, as Calvin falsely says, not of the Latin word "sacrament, both which we know to have a more extended sig-"nification," &c. See Rheims Testament in loc. This is true enough: Austin applies the word to the casting out of Ishmael in Gen. xxi. which he calls "magnum sacramentum;" and after observing that God confirmed the words of Sarah, he adds, "Jam hic "manifestum est sacramentum, quia nescio quid futurum partu-"riebat illa res gesta;" "because that act led to something that "was to come after." In Johan. tract xi. Since then such is the meaning of "sacramentum," both in the vulgate and in the fathers, what pretence is there for their taking the word in that particular sense in which, by us and by them, the word sacrament is now understood? For in fact it is only upon these passages in which the word clearly signifies "mystery," and nothing else, that they, following Peter Lombard, the first author of this conceit, have built

of penance, because it belongs to this question of merits, I shall now proceed to say a few words, and thus conclude this head.

The practice of penance was certainly not unknown in the first ages of the church. It was thought a necessary, and an edifying act of humiliation, for those who had been guilty of scandalous crimes, more especially those who had fallen away in time of persecution, publicly to confess their sin, and submit to open shame, before they were again received to communion. Undoubtedly such a practice might well be justified from Scripture, and particularly from what appears to have taken place in the church of Corinth, under the directions of St. Paul. But, as the intention was not only to reform the offender, but to deter others from the commission of the offence, all was public, confession as well as penance[8]. Afterwards, when the external

that doctrine. See Fulk's note, ib. So that after all (taking their own state of the case) either it rests upon this passage, thus misinterpreted, or it is a purely arbitrary decision of their church.

[8] And particularly there was no respect of persons, or any commutation allowed. See Bingham's Eccl. Antiq. b. xvi. c. iii. § 3. Indeed that there is no mention of indulgences, either in the Scriptures, or in the old doctors of the church, is admitted by the most respectable writers, even of the Romish communion. Cardinal Cajetan says, "De ortu indulgentiarum si certitudo haberi posset, "veritati indagandæ opem ferret; verum nulla sacræ scripturæ, "nulla sacrorum doctorum Græcorum aut Latinorum authoritas "scripta hanc ad nostram deduxit ætatam." Opuc. tom. 1. tract 1531. Durandus, one of their most famous writers, says the same,

pressure upon the church was diminished, and she had tasted the sweets of worldly prosperity, this, like all other branches of discipline, was relaxed; and the confession was allowed to take place, first before a few, and afterwards to the priest only; and by the priest only the offender was reconciled to the church. Upon this, by degrees, was built the doctrine of private and general confession, and the obligation of every man to undergo that humiliation. The idea of repentance, as entertained in the Scriptures, and consisting simply in the change of the heart, in sorrow, and amendment of life, assumed a more complex form. By the help of the Vulgate, that which alone is material, and of great price in the sight of God, the conversion of the spirit, is become of comparatively little significance. For the Greek word μετανοειν, which conveys no other sense but that of an operation of the mind,

" De indulgentiis pauca dici possunt per certitudinem quia nec " Scriptura de iis expressè loquitur; sancti etiam ut Ambrosius " Hil. Aug. Hieron. minimé loquuntur de indulgentiis." Durand. 64. dist. 20. 9. 3. After this it may not be amiss to subjoin the decree of the Council of Trent on the subject. " Cum pro- " testas conferendi indulgentias a Christo ecclesiæ concessa sit: " atque hujusmodi protestate divinitus sibi tradita antiquissimis " etiam temporibus illa usa fuerit: Sacrosancta synodus indulgen- " tiarum usum Christiano populo maxime salutarem et sanctorum " conciliorum auctoritate probatum in ecclesiâ retinendum esse " docit et præcipit, eosque anathemate damnat qui aut inutiles " esse asserunt vel eas concedendi in ecclesiâ potestatem esse " negant." V. Pallavicini Hist. Conc. Trid. l. xxiv. c. 8.

a change purely spiritual, the Vulgate had substituted "agere pœnitentiam," rendered again into English, "to do penance." And, in process of time, this same term of "penance" has usurped both the place and the office of "re-"pentance[9]." This is now, since the Council of Trent established it as a sacrament, declared to consist in four acts, three of them allotted to the penitent, being contrition, confession, and satisfaction: by which, when crowned with the fourth, that is "absolution at the hand of the "priest," it is held that all his sins committed

[9] Agreeably to this, in the Rheims Testament, John the Baptist, Matthew iii. v. 3, is made to say not "repent," but "do penance," for "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And ib. v. 8, yield therefore "fruits worthy of penance," which in the note is explained to mean "works" of penance, such as fasting, prayer, alms, and the like. So it is in all similar passages; as in Rom. ii. 7, we have "the benignitie of God bringeth thee to penance," instead of "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." This sort of phrase would shock one's ears for its barbarism, if it were not something so much worse. See Erasmus ad loc. whose sentiments agree with those of Lactantius, an old father of the church, and a particular favourite with the Romanists; and which I shall therefore set down here. Speaking of repentance (pœnitentia) he says, "Græci melius et significantius μετανοιαν dicunt: quam nos "possumus resipiscentiam dicere: resipiscit enim et mentem suam "quasi ab insaniâ recipit quem errati piget," &c. There was therefore no need in Latin of using such a term as "pœnitentia;" or, in English, of coining the word penance; a term still more improper, because appropriated wholly to that error. Mr. Ward, however (and of course his late editor), have the modesty to place the translation of our Bible in these places among his supposed "Errata." See Lact. de vero cultu § 24.

since baptism are forgiven[10]. How different all this is from the simplicity of Scripture, or of ecclesiastical discipline, as it originally prevailed, I need not point out to you. I must, however, call your attention to the ability which is here asserted to be in us to *satisfy* for our sins. The satisfaction indeed in most cases is easy enough. It is, as they define it themselves, the "doing "of the penance which is enjoined by the priest." That in ordinary cases this is not very heavy there is reason to believe; but that, whenever the interests (and, I mean even the temporal interests) of the church required it, the penance has been most serious, history will furnish us with a thousand examples. In this country, particularly, we must remember, that one of our kings purchased absolution from pretended transgressions with no less than the surrender of his dominions. Upon these, however, and other

[10] That is, I suppose, those sins which merited eternal damnation. The pains of purgatory are still to be redeemed by drawing upon the other fund. There is, however, a good deal of confusion in this: for in some of the collects respecting the saints (as before observed), they are considered as interposing, to save men from the pains of hell, and to procure them eternal happiness. Vid. note 16, of Sermon V. On the other hand, the satisfaction which is here commonly required to be made, is precisely that sort of performances, which, according to their notions, exalts human beings into a state of saintship. As see infr. n. 12. In this account of penance I have followed the short catechism printed for the London district, that I might not be supposed to misrepresent the tenets of the Romanists, as now professed in England.

instances, I need not dwell; you will see of yourselves what a prodigious source of wordly advantage this must necessarily have proved, and must still prove, as far as the times will bear it, in the hands of those who, generally speaking, have never scrupled any means for the increase of their own private fortunes, or the advancement of their order. But gross as this abuse was, and is, it is yet of less consequence than that fundamental error, in thus teaching men that they are able to make satisfaction to God; and thus drawing away their minds from the contemplation of him who alone is their Redeemer, who alone is entitled to our thanks and praises, and whose doctrine we can never receive as we ought, unless we are first made sensible of our nothingness, of our "inability of "ourselves to help ourselves." But, indeed, since the church of Rome still reserves to herself the power of swelling the calendar of her saints, since she still presumes, and has actually, within only a very few years, presumed to assert in practice this proud and impious pretension of creating new objects of religious worship, it must of course follow that she should uphold, in its full extent, this doctrine of merits, and this supposed ability in every individual of her communion, by his own efforts, to raise himself to that high eminence. We must not wonder therefore if, in the number of anathemas pro-

nounced by the council of Trent, there should be one reserved for those who presume to deny that the good works of any mortal man can have any such efficacy*.

It remains for us to inquire what is the nature of these merits, which, according to the church of Rome, entitle a man to this crown of glory, which thus raise him in some respect to a level with his Saviour, and obtain for him a share in that most excellent office of making intercession for sins. For, you will recollect that she was charged, in the third place, with holding such false ideas of Christian perfection, as were not only erroneous in themselves, but pernicious in their consequences, as leading to dissoluteness of manners, and, at best, resting upon the observance of practices trifling and useless, and even ridiculous, rather than the essential duties of faith and charity.

If this shall, upon examination, be found to be a true statement; if the qualities and the achievements for which the Romish saints are pronounced to be blessed, shall turn out to be of the nature which I have here attributed to them, what an aggravation must it be of the folly and impiety which is thus committed? How must it increase the condemnation of this idolatrous church, that the individuals whom she worships were so far from deserving religious

* See Decret. Concil. Trident. Sess. vi. c. 16. can. 32.

honour, that they were hardly entitled to the lowest degree of civil respect; nay, that for the most part, the history of their lives is but a tissue of the most childish and contemptible extravagances.

In order the better to detect what is falsehood, let us first take a view of what is unquestionably the truth.

Any man who coolly considers the workings of our holy religion, as exemplified in the conduct of our Lord and his apostles, will, I think, agree with me, that there is no quality which so peculiarly and appropriately belongs to it as sobriety. It is throughout natural and consistent, without pretensions or affectation. Our blessed Lord came down upon earth expressly to suffer. It was a part of his mission that he should be placed in an inferior rank of life, that he should be poor, "despised and rejected of "men." But we never find him, voluntarily, or by any act of his, aggravating the evils and inconveniences of that situation in which he was found, imposing upon himself, or his followers, unnecessary mortifications. So far from it, we find him reproached by the hypocrites of those days, because, as he expresses it, "he came eat-"ing and drinking." So much was he in every respect like unto his brethren, sin only excepted. When he observed that "the foxes had holes, "and the birds of the air had nests, but the son

"of man had not where to lay his head," it was said not ostentatiously nor by way of complaint, but simply as a warning to those who were mistaking the nature of his kingdom. He was buffeted indeed and spit upon, and he patiently submitted to it; but he did not provoke or unnecessarily expose himself to these or any other indignities. Nay, in one instance when he was struck, he remonstrated with the man who had committed that outrage.

Similar to this was the conduct of the apostles, those true and faithful followers of their blessed master. In them may be traced the same moderation, the same evenness and steadiness both of life and conversation. They were equally free from rashness and from weakness. Their zeal was fervent and pure, and uniformly active, but never broke out into excess or violence of any sort. They lived with other men, and like other men; nay, at times in houses which they hired: sometimes they were maintained by the disciples, at other times they provided for themselves; as was best suited to circumstances and as might best promote or advance the gospel which they preached. They fasted indeed, but only as others fasted, as was common, and as has always been common, more especially in eastern countries. If they journeyed often, if they were often in perils and dangers, it was

not that they desired these things, but that they necessarily met with them in the course of their mission. As to scourgings and imprisonments, they not only did not inflict them upon themselves, but they complained of them and would have avoided them when inflicted by others. In some cases they actually did escape them by their own act: in others the hand of God miraculously interposed for their deliverance. Above all, their humility was real, it was natural and without parade. There was no ostentatious self-abasement, none of that disclaimer of merit which is only calculated to invite praise. They seemed never to think of themselves: yet when called upon by the occasion they readily and naturally spoke of their labours with all the simplicity of truth, without exaggeration or diminution.

Let us now turn from these the real and undoubted saints of the church, to the spurious and false imitators of them, whom the interested policy and superstition of modern times has raised to the same rank, or even to a more exalted post in their scale of worship and of holiness.

I pass by all those saints who were manifestly canonized for no other reason but for the assistance which they ministered to the church of Rome, in the establishment of her manifold

usurpations: their Saint Thomas a Beckets[11], St. Thomas Aquinases, St. Pius the 5th, and St. Gregory the 7th. I will confine myself to those whose labours tended only in a general way to the exaltation of that church and the recommendation of her doctrines. Now nothing can be more different than are the lives of these pretended confessors and martyrs from those of the first and true apostles. There, we have seen, all is natural and easy; but in the modern saints all is forced and out of the due course of things. Their whole exertion consists in arbitrary sufferings fancifully imposed either by themselves or by some rule to which they have

[11] I cannot however help making one or two observations respecting this saint. For what merits he was canonized every one knows. I have already observed upon his having greater honour paid to him than the immediate apostles of Christ. His life is written by the late popish archbishop Dr. Butler, very much at length. In this as may be supposed his contests with his sovereign are smoothed over with great address, and the "eminent sanctity" of the martyr, as he is called, is given as a complete answer to all the relations of historians that are unfavourable to him. Butler's Lives of the Saints, part iv. Dr. Butler (ib.) gives an account of the sermon preached by this saint on the Christmas day preceding his death; but forgets a circumstance mentioned by Radulphus de Diceto: that after the service performed he solemnly excommunicated, with lighted candles, (accensis candelis) Nigell de Latberilla, for violently intruding into the church of Herges, and Robert de Brooks, who had, in mockery of him, cropped one of his sumpter horses, "qui equum quendam ipsius archiepiscopi victualia defe-" rentem ad ignominiam ejus decurtaverat." Such was the "cha-" rity and zeal," which we are told so abounded in the martyr! See Anglia Sacra. part ii. p. 691.

submitted. Their labours are directed to no end, or to such as is evidently mistaken and unauthorized by Scripture. The pains which they undergo are not only voluntarily inflicted, but often attended with such silly refinements, with circumstances so ridiculous as would hardly be credited if they were not related by their own panegyrists with the express view of exalting their character[18]. They therefore can excite no

[18] Of St. John of the Cross it is said, "When he arrived at Salamanca in order to commence his higher studies, the austerities "which he practised were excessive. He chose for his cell a "little dark hole at the bottom of the dormitory; a hollow board "something like a grave, was his bed. He platted himself so "rough a hair shirt that at the least motion it pricked his body to "blood. His fasts and other mortifications were incredible." Afterwards it is said, "For fear of contracting any attachment to "earthly things he was a rigorous observer and lover of poverty. "All the furniture of his little cell or chamber consisted in a paper "image and a cross of rushes, and he would have the meanest "beads and breviary, and wear the most threadbare habit he could "get." Butler's Lives of the Saints, part iv. p. 777, &c. A certain St. Felix, of Cantalicio, went beyond this, "for he wore a "shirt of iron links, and plates studded with rough spikes," and he "privately used to pick out of the basket the crusts left by the re-"ligious, for his own dinner." Ib. part ii. p. 434. Yet even this is exceeded by St. Frances, for she "got her dry crusts from the "pouches of the beggars in exchange for better bread. Her dis-"cipline was armed with rowels and sharp points," &c. Ib. part i. p. 424. Of St. Peter of Alcantara, we are told that "such was "the restraint he put upon his eyes, that he had been a consider-"able time a religious man without ever knowing that the church "of his convent was vaulted. After having had the care of serving "the refectory for half a year, he was chid by the superior for "having never given the friars any of the fruits in his custody, to

compassion, no sober man can feel an interest in their fate. Indeed, they desire not, they ex-

" which the servant of God humbly answered that he had never " seen any. The truth was that he had never lifted up his eyes to " the ceiling where the fruit was hanging upon twigs. He told St. " Teresa that he once lived in a house three years without know- " ing any of his religious brethren but by their voices. He seemed " by long habits of mortification to have almost lost the sense of " what he ate, for when a little vinegar and salt was thrown into " a porringer of warm water, he took it for his usual soup of " beans." Ib. part iv. p. 379. St. Laurence Justinian is an instance of the same sort. " A servant presenting him vinegar one " day at table instead of wine and water he drank it without saying " a word." Ib. part iii. p. 843. Further he " never drank out of " meals: when asked to do it under excessive heats and weariness, " he used to say, ' If we cannot bear this thirst how shall we " endure the fire of purgatory?" Ib. p. 834. St. Francis Xavier, " recollecting that in his youth he had been fond of jumping and " dancing, tied his arms and thighs with little cords, which by " his travelling swelled his thighs and sunk into his flesh so as " scarcely to be visible." Ib. part iv. p. 850, and Novena. With many of these saints frequent discipline is a great panacea. St. Francis Borgia began it at ten years old. Ib. p. 150. St. Peter Damian recommended " the use of disciplines whereby to subdue " and punish the flesh, which was adopted as a compensation for " long penitential fasts: three thousand lashes with a recital of " thirty psalms, were a redemption of a canonical penance of one " year's continuance." Ib. part i. p. 332. Accordingly of himself we are told that " he tortured his body with iron girdles and fre- " quent disciplines." P. 334. The following instances can hardly be read without a smile, "The physician having ordered him (St. " Aloysius) and another sick brother to take a very bitter draught, " the other drank it at once with the ordinary helps to qualify the " bitterness of the taste, but Aloysius sipped it slowly, and, as it " were, drop by drop that he might have the longer and fuller taste " of what was mortifying." Ib. part ii. p. 698. St. Aicard, (it being the custom in his community for every monk to shave his

pressly disclaim any such sympathy, they arrogantly consider themselves as above the feelings of human nature. Their pretensions, in fact, as nourished and supported by their church, bring them close upon the very borders of impiety, if they do not actually make them guilty of that crime.

For if you consider the whole tenor of their lives, you will perceive that invariably their sufferings, the hardships and the pains which they inflict upon themselves are considered as being intrinsically and abstractedly meritorious. They thus ascribe to themselves, or have ascribed to

crown on Saturdays) "having once been hindered on the Saturday, "began to shave himself very early on the Sunday morning before the "divine office, but was touched with remorse in that action, and "is said to have seen in a vision the devil picking up every hair "which he had cut off at so undue a time, to produce against "him at the divine tribunal. The holy man desisted and passed the "day with his head half shaved: and in that condition grievously "accused and condemned himself in full chapter with abundance "of tears." Ib. part iii. p. 927. Lastly, St. Francis Borgia above mentioned, "Being once on a journey with F. Bustamanti, they "lay all night together in a cottage upon straw; and F. Busta-"manti, who was very old and asthmatical, coughed and spit all "night; and thinking that he spit upon the wall frequently dis-"gorged a great quantity of phlegm on his face, which the saint "never turned from him. Next morning F. Bustamanti finding "what he had done was in great confusion and begged his pardon. "Francis answered, 'You have no reason, you could not have "found a fouler place or fitter to spit upon." This gentleman also, "in sickness chewed bitter pills, and swallowed the most "nauseous potions slowly," on the same principle. Ib. part iv. pp. 204 & 206.

them, what belongs and can belong to no creature, what never did belong to any being but our Lord himself. His sufferings were indeed, and were intended to be meritorious; they were so both in respect of himself and of those for whom he suffered, and to whose salvation that merit was to be effectual. But they were so meritorious, both on account of his nature, so different from ours, and on account of the divine councils which had from the beginning appointed as well the sufferings as the redemption of which they were to be productive. For any creature therefore, any mere human being to expose himself to sufferings, as if he were by that act establishing a claim to merit nakedly and abstractedly taken is, what I have stated it to be, little or nothing short of absolute blasphemy and impiety. All that belongs to any of us in these cases is the hope that our patience under sufferings may make us acceptable to God; and this more especially if we consider, as we ought, all misfortune to be, as it is, his dispensation, sent upon us for our chastisement, and for our improvement; but even this is only because he has so appointed. As to voluntary mortifications, or any self-denial more than is necessary to keep down our lusts and inordinate appetites, and for the due exercise of charity; and except in such extraordinary cases as occurred in the first ages, and in some subsequent

ambition of obtaining the praise of men, and sharing in the glory which belongs only to their Redeemer. One of these (St. Xavier) we are expressly told, satisfied for the sins of others; and many instances of his doing this, in the most ridiculous and farcical ways, are gravely related. Of another (a St. Charles Boromeo) it is related, that by walking in certain processions barefoot, and with a halter about his neck, he thus "offered himself a victim for the sins "of the people[16]." And these stories, these blas-

[16] Butler ubi supr. p. 558. This is said of others. St. Thomas of Villanova, "when any of his subjects had committed any grievous fault, joined fasting and bloody disciplines with earnest "prayers and tears, that it would please the Lord of mercy to bring "back the strayed sheep for which he had shed his blood." Ib. part iii. 987. Penance throughout is considered as satisfaction, and even as a sacrifice. St. Cæsarius "strongly inculcated the "fear of the pains of purgatory for venial sins, and the necessity of "effacing them by daily penance." Ib. p. 661. After speaking of St. Francis Borgia's hair shirts and disciplines, with the cloths with which he wiped off the blood, as kept by him under lock and key, it is added, "sometimes he put gravel in his shoes when he "walked; and daily, by many little artifices, he studied to complete the sacrifice of his penance," &c. Ib. part iv. p. 205. Of St. Peter Damian we are told, that "old age, and his journey, did "not make him lay aside his accustomed mortifications, by which "he consummated his holocaust." Ib. part i. p. 334. In the Novena, the votary of St. Francis Xavier is taught to pray, that he may be brought to love penance, and thereby satisfy God for his sins, p. 73. So inveterate is this notion, that we find it prevailing in those who have borne the most respectable character in that communion. The late bishop of St. Pol de Leon is stated, in a biographical account of him, seemingly from authority, to have begun his will in these words:—"I submit myself to the holy

phemies (for such they are) are not taken from legends of the dark ages; they are found in modern books of biography and devotion, expressly compiled, and sold for the instruction and improvement of the present generation[17].

But of all the attempts of this kind, the most direct, as well as the most successful, the most impious also, because the most deliberately carried into execution, and persevered in, is the celebrated legend of the stigmates, or five wounds of St. Francis. The success of this

" will of God, as to the time and circumstances of my death, and " I unite the sacrifice of my life to that which Jesus Christ has " voluntarily made of his own, to satisfy the justice of his Father for " the sins of myself and all mankind." Gentleman's Magazine, for May, 1807, page 397.

[17] I must beg the reader to bear this in mind. The book from which I have quoted is that which is in use among the Roman Catholics of these kingdoms, and written by a late titular archbishop of Ireland. Both the book and its author are spoken of with great approbation by the Romish bishops of this day. And indeed in some respects Dr. Butler has shewn a discretion which has not been followed by those who have come after him; for he gives up most of the stories told of St. Patrick, some of which Dr. Milner seems now endeavouring to bring into credit. See Inquiry into certain Vulgar Opinions, &c. See particularly p. 225, where St. Patrick is said to have prayed, and as supposed with success, that all the Irish should have true repentance, " pœnitentiam cre- " dentium," though at the hour of death; and, secondly, that they should not always be oppressed by barbarians (or foreigners). " Ne a barbaris consumerentur in æternum." When one recollects the present situation of affairs, one cannot help thinking that this legend is not brought forward without a view of producing a particular effect.

strange imposition is the more remarkable, because the idea was not the saint's own, but other persons before him had imagined this means of recommending themselves to notice, and had failed in establishing their pretensions. This had happened particularly in England only two years before[18]. Notwithstanding the prejudices which one may suppose must have been excited in consequence, the matter was so contrived by this father of the mendicant orders, and so carried on by his successors, that it has now, for near six hundred years, passed current in the Romish church, that St. Francis was, by Christ himself, impressed with five wounds, exactly similar to those which our Saviour bore upon the cross. Not content with this the Franciscans have pushed their impiety to such a height, as to represent their founder to have been in every particular so conformable to our Lord, as to be hardly in any degree different or inferior[19]. In

[18] See Wilkins's Concilia, vol. i. p. 584; or Matth. Paris, ad annum 1222. A man is apprehended and punished as having in his body "quinque vulnera crucifixi." Mosheim is of opinion that St. Francis barely imprinted these marks on himself, as others have done, and that the story of their being impressed on his body by Christ himself was an invention of his order after his death. Mosheim, vol. iii. p. 335. See the whole fable most solemnly related in Butler's Lives, part iv. p. 89.

[19] See in particular their famous book of the resemblances between Christ and St. Francis: "Liber conformitatum," &c. From this book large extracts were published by the first Reformers, under the title of the "Alcoran des Cordelius." See Mosheim, ubi supr.

all this they have been favoured by the popes, who reaped great advantages from the labours of this order. The fable has been recognised by more than one bull, and even enjoined as matter of faith: while, with a direct reference to it, a festival was instituted in honour of the five wounds of Christ[80].

[80] After this signal instance of blasphemy, so solemnly received for truth, there is no invention of man, however profane or strange, which can excite our surprise. I must, however, mention two, because they are taken from the respective acts of canonization of the saints, to which they relate. St. Frances, above-mentioned, "enjoyed," it seems, "the familiar conversation of her guardian "angel." Butler's Lives, part i. p. 427. In St. Bonaventure's Life there is a flight almost equal to St. Francis's stigmates. "His "humility," it is said, "sometimes withheld him from the holy "table." "Several days had passed, nor did he yet presume to "present himself at the heavenly banquet; but while he was "hearing mass, and meditating on the passion of Jesus Christ, "our Saviour, to crown his humility and love, put into his mouth, "by the ministry of an angel, part of the consecrated host, taken "from the hand of the priest." Ib. part iii. p. 115. It is a very common thing with the "modern" saints, in their raptures, to be lifted up two or three feet from the ground; some, as St. Francis, six or seven; and St. Philip of Novi several yards. In the life of this last saint the biographer enters into a disquisition respecting the manner in which this is brought about, part ii. p. 459. Of this man also it is testified that "divine love so much dilated his breast "in an extraordinary rapture, that the gristle which joined the "fourth and fifth ribs was broken, which accident allowed the "heart, and larger vessels, more play; in which condition he lived "fifty years." Ib. p. 456. St. Teresa, in her visions, saw all the secrets of purgatory: and particularly the souls of several persons "freed from thence by the prayers of devout persons," &c. Ib.

Of the miracles by which the virtues of this, and other the like saints, were supposed to have been manifested, I might now say something; but to compare them with those real signs and wonders, which were indeed wrought by God, might require more time than can well be spared. If, on the other hand, I were only to mention the most obviously extravagant of them, it might break in upon that seriousness which it is always desirable to preserve in this place[81].

These instances, however, will sufficiently shew how little of real humility there is in this excess of mortification and severity of penance, in which the church of Rome places that perfection which leads to canonization. I must, however, further observe, that to the composition of a modern saint the observance of monastic vows appears to be essential; and this is indeed no more than might have been expected, if we consider what advantage the popes have

part iv. p. 325. I believe I may now say "Ohe! jam satis est!" Dr. Milner however, as I find from one of his publications, is a votary of St. Teresa.

[81] Most of them are such cures as that wrought at St. Winifred's well. But the reader may consult the late bishop Douglas's Criterion, where also he will see the signal imposture of the Jesuits, who at first disclaimed the idea of their founder having worked miracles; till finding it for their interest that he should be sainted, as well as others, they changed their note, and produced all that was required of them for that purpose.

derived from the institution of what they call religious orders. To these the see of Rome has always looked as to its most decided supporters. And, in gratitude for their services, as well as with a view to the continuance of them, it has declared that only among them perfection was to be found. In pursuance of this a distinction is taken, not only not warranted by Scripture, but unknown to antiquity. Whereas our Lord, to those who asked him the way to eternal life, answered simply "Keep the commandments," these jugglers have devised something yet more refined, by which a higher degree of glory may be obtained. Besides the things which are commanded, and which our Lord has thus declared to be sufficient, they have discovered certain other particulars (which they call the evangelical counsels), for the observance of which greater and more shining rewards are reserved. And these are precisely the things which men vow when they enter into a monastic life: voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and obedience, that is a blind obedience, to the commands of their superiors.

The objections which are made by all Protestants to the requiring, or even entertaining of such vows, are sufficiently known, to make it unnecessary for me to say more than a few words on the subject. We object to them as being a snare to the consciences of men, the

generality of whom are incapable of persevering in any such courses, and therefore can only make such vows to their own destruction[*]. This is the more true, as we know in fact that individuals entered, and were solicited, nay, in some sort by force, induced to enter into monasteries at that early age, when they could not be acquainted with either the strength of their bodies, or the disposition of their minds. And that the profession of celibacy did not necessarily produce chastity, nor the vow of poverty exempt those who had made it from covetousness or luxury; no, nor that of obedience from giving way to contention and strife, is so proved by the writers of that very church, that I need only refer you to them, as shewing most decisively what I asserted, that all these false and feigned standards of perfection only led to dissoluteness of manners, and the increase of vice, as well as to open blasphemy and impiety.

[*] The following observation in Dr. Butler's Life of St. Teresa is remarkable, as it shews how the truth will sometimes force its way even in the most perverted minds. "A desire most perfectly to "obey God in all things, moved her to make a vow never with a "full knowledge to commit a venial sin, and in every action to do "what seemed to her most perfect; a vow which, in persons less "perfect, would be unlawful, because it would be an occasion of "transgressions." Butler's Lives, part iv. 329. One great evil which grew out of these rash and "unlawful" vows was, that men being glad to find out any means of getting rid of them, submitted to the authority assumed by the popes of dispensing with all vows and oaths, even those by which subjects were bound to their sovereigns.

Had therefore those who called the council of Trent been actuated by any serious intention of reforming abuses, we might well have expected that such as these would not have been overlooked. The causes of that dissoluteness, which was so frequent among the clergy, both secular and professed, as they were well understood, would of course have been removed. But it was seen by the popes, as it was confessed and argued by one of their adherents, that if the clergy were allowed to marry, and so to have houses, and wives, and children, they would come to depend upon their princes, and not upon the pope. And this will sufficiently shew, what I have already stated, as applying to the monks, why in all ages the see of Rome has been so anxious and so active in the imposition of celibacy upon her priests, and other ministers of religion. By keeping them as much as possible unconnected with the rest of the world, a powerful body was established, which was always ready to support every the most extravagant claim or pretension of that church; and indeed it was not till the ambitious Hildebrand, pope Gregory the 7th, had asserted his claim to supreme dominion, in the most extensive sense, that measures were effectually taken and pursued to restrain the secular clergy from contracting

marriage[23]. Still, however, a great preference was always given by the popes to those who are called the regular clergy; because the vows of poverty and of obedience which they take, in addition to that of celibacy, tended still more to detach them from all connexion with temporal princes, and to secure to the see of Rome most exclusively the benefit of their exertions. And indeed any man, who will look ever so cursorily into the legends of the saints, will see this most strongly exemplified in the high estimation which is every where bestowed upon this same virtue of obedience, and the excess to which, in the most minute and trifling particulars, it is carried[24].

There remain now only three points for me to touch upon, of the number of those which I have mentioned, as rather secondary to, and supporting the others, than as original or primary: though it must be said, at the same time,

[23] See Usher de Christianarum Ecclesiarum successione et statu, c. v. §. 10, with the testimonies there cited. See also Collier's Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 191, as to how the case stood in this kingdom.

[24] For example, take a certain "St. Stanislas Kotska." "In the "practice of obedience to his superiors, such was his exactitude, "that, as he was one day carrying wood with a fellow novice, he "would not help the other in taking up a load upon his shoulders, "till he had made it less, because it was larger than the brother "who superintended the work had directed, though the other had "taken no notice of such an order." Butler's Lives, part iv. p. 655.

that there have been no doctrines or practices more seriously prejudicial to the true faith, both in extent and degree.

The first is that monstrous tenet, which is held by the church of Rome, respecting what are called traditions, to which I have already alluded, and according to which equal authority is given to them as to the Scriptures themselves. This is attempted to be justified, upon the ground that whatever is come down to us, as the word of God, was first spoken before it was written: and that all that was spoken was not committed to writing at the time. From thence, applying their doctrine of the infallibility of the church, they maintain that whatever is taught by their church, although it be not found in holy writ, must be taken to have been originally spoken by Christ, or his apostles. And thus that which from daily experience we know to be of all things the most uncertain and fallible, more especially when going back to the transactions of ages past, oral communication, and loose report, are equalled to the authentic relations and expositions of the faith, deliberately set down and published by those who were truly and undoubtedly apostles and evangelists. This is such a confusion of all historical evidence, to say no more; it is such an opening to all manner of frauds and forgeries (as indeed it was adopted

with no other view), that the bare statement of it is sufficient for its confutation[95]. I must, however, recal your attention to what is said in my text, that you may see how closely these modern Pharisees have imitated the example of those by whom our Lord was crucified, and his disciples persecuted. I must also add, as a further instance of "teaching for doctrines the "commandments of men," that, in all the Romish catechisms, there is a regular section allotted to the commandments of the church, as distinguished from the commandments of God;

[95] Even their favourite, St. Austin, is directly against them here, as in so many other points. He has two very strong passages to that effect. One is in the third book, against Petilianus (c. vi.) where, arguing against schismatics, and for the authority, as well as unity of the church, he cites, and relies upon the passage in Galat. i. 8. "If we, or an angel from heaven, should preach any other gospel "unto you than that which we have preached, let him be ac-"cursed;" but instead of "that which we have preached," he puts "other than what ye have received in the Scriptures of the Old "and the New Testament." "Si angelus de cælo vobis annun-"ciaverit præterquam quod in Scripturis legalibus et evangelicis "accepistis anathema sit." Tom. ix. ed. Bened. And that, he says, extends to every particular of doctrine, whether relating to Christ, or his church, or to faith, or practice. "Sive de Christo "sive ejus ecclesiâ, sive de aliâ quacunque re quæ pertinet ad fidem "vitamque vestram." In his book, "De Doctrinâ Christianâ," he is equally explicit as to the Scriptures, containing all things necessary to salvation. (Book ii. c. 9.) "In eis quæ aperté in Scrip-"turis posita sunt inveniuntur illa omnia quæ continent fidem, "moresque vivendi, spem scilicet atque caritatem." Tom. iii. ed. Bened.

and that the one and the other are made a matter of the same strict obligation[96]. Lastly, I must bid you recollect that other act of most abominable presumption, by which, in express derogation of our Lord's institution, the cup in the eucharist is denied to the laity; thus also unduly exalting the clergy above their brethren; which practice they themselves justify only as a mere ordinance of the church[97].

The next abomination by which that church is distinguished, and which she had adopted evidently as a means of upholding her authority is the withholding of the Scriptures from the laity, or suffering them to be read only by those to whom she grants a special permission. Of this the principle, wicked as it is, cannot be mistaken. They only are enemies to knowledge whose deeds are evil; who, if they come to the light must be reproved. I need not surely

[96] They are, first, to keep certain appointed days holy, with obligation of hearing mass, and resting from servile works; second, to fast in Lent, &c. fifth, to pay tythes; sixth, not to solemnize marriage at certain times, nor within certain degrees of kindred, nor privately without witnesses. See Catechism for London district. The Douay Catechism says expressly, that men are bound to keep the commandments of the church "under pain of mortal sin." See Abstract of Douay Catechism, printed for Keating and Co.

[97] I cannot however help observing, that the seal of the Christian covenant seems to be particularly attached to the cup. This is the "cup of the New Testament," or covenant, in my blood, which is not said of the bread, and this makes the subtraction the more daring and abominable. Acts, c. xvii. p. 11.

point out to you how in Scripture we are required "of ourselves to judge what is right;" how we are reminded that those very Scriptures were "written for our instruction," how those men, as the Bereans for example, are commended who "searched the Scriptures;" how the law and the prophets are every where appealed to; and that, so far from being supposed that the gospel is above the comprehension of ordinary men, it is said, "that God has hidden those "things from the wise and prudent and re-"vealed them to babes*." I, therefore, only need remind you of it as a fact, and add that the doctrine is still maintained in England, and more especially in Ireland, and necessarily so maintained by those who style themselves vicars apostolical, and who of course are bound to speak the language and enforce the tenets of that see from which they derive their authority[28].

* Matt. xi. 25.

[28] Hear for example bishop Milner in his Pastoral Letter p. 8. The unlearned "are to receive the bread of the word of God, ready "broken and prepared for their digestion at the hands of their "pastors." And see his "Inquiry into certain Vulgar Opinions, "&c." p. 185, where Irenæus is quoted to no purpose; and with how much truth St. Austin is brought in as favouring his opinion may be judged from the passages which I have adduced above in note [24]. It is clear how the African bishop would have answered the Romish bishop's question, when the latter asks, "Is "the perusal of the bible, Sir, the only means by which mankind

Of that which is rather a part of the same, than a properly distinct abuse, the continuing

" can attain to a knowledge of the revealed truths of the bible?" Certainly, he would have said, either by perusing it, or by those who can't read hearing it read to them, and appealing to that and that only when there is any doubt. For in the chapter already cited from his Book de Doctrinâ Christianâ, he would have the Christian read and get by heart the Scriptures, even though he cannot yet understand them. The first thing to be observed, he says, " prima ob- " servantia," is " nôsse istos libros, et, si nondum ad intellectum, " legendo tamen vel mandare memoriæ vel omnino incognitas non " habere." Aug. op. Tom. iii. p. 19. How indeed the pastors of the Romish church " break and prepare the bread of the word of " God for the digestion" of their flock, we have seen in but too many instances; but it may not be amiss to add another sample from this last book of Dr. Milner's. He tells us of the Irish having withstood the persecutions of almost three centuries in support of the religion, " *once for all delivered to them by the saints*," (his own Italics) " that is, by St. Patrick and his disciples," and boldly cites at the bottom of the page, Jude v. 3. Now my readers will know that that passage is one which when properly quoted has a very different aspect. It speaks of the faith " *once delivered TO the saints*," that is, delivered at the time when St. Jude wrote to the faithful in the apostolic age: not such as might be delivered *BY* Romish *saints* several centuries after. St. Jude was of the same mind as St. Paul in the passage above cited, that not only no *saint* but not even an *angel* should add to the faith then already delivered once for all. And this being the very point in issue between the Romanists and us, we cannot have a better proof how Scripture not only can be, but is, perverted by these precious " breakings" and " preparations for " digestion," of the Romish bishops and priests. Dr. Butler, another such prelate, tells us in his Lives of the Saints, part iv. p. 378, that " Christ declares the spirit and constant practice of penance to " be the foundation of a Christian or spiritual life." Pray where did Dr. Butler find this? Not in the true gospel certainly. As for Dr. Milner he not only misrepresents Scripture, but the doctrines and the feeling of Protestants upon the subject. We do not, as he

to pray in a tongue which has become no longer intelligible to the mass of the people, I shall only observe, that this also could only have been established with the same view of exalting the priest above the congregation; so as to increase the superstitious veneration paid to him by the vulgar, and establish more firmly the empire of the church.

I come now to that last most important head of persecution, ever to be borne in mind; since by that more than any other, or rather by that alone, the dominion of the pope has been upheld, and such narrow bounds have been set to the progress of the reformation. This is so notorious, the cruelties which in every European country have been exercised againt all those who in any manner presumed to question the authority of the Romish church, have for ages been so openly avowed and even justified by her warmest partizans, that we must greatly wonder to find any man at this day so hardy as to dispute the existence either of the facts or of the doctrine upon which they were founded.

Odious indeed, and anti-christian as the doctrine manifestly is, we cannot wonder that even

supposes (Inquiry, p. 188), "wish to take the bible out of the hands "of the Quakers," or of any other dissenters, however they may wrest the Scriptures to their own undoing. Our wish is that they should read it to better purpose; that they should re-consider it until by that light they come to get rid of their errors.

they who would practise it, where it was in their power, should at times and in countries where it could only be exerted against themselves, even for their own protection, wish it to be disclaimed, or at least thrown into the shade. We might expect that under such circumstances, the attempt would be made to explain away or to soften the apparent harshness and atrociousness of the law, to excuse it under the plea of necessity, of unavoidable prejudice or ignorance. But for any man in the teeth of general councils, of successive popes, of hundreds of doctors, nay of saints, to affirm that persecution is not (which implies that it has never been) a tenet of the church of Rome, is an assertion so monstrous, so flagrantly devoid of truth, that I will venture to say it was never till now conceived to be possible.

This however is what has lately been done, not by an obscure or ordinary individual, one who might be supposed to do it inconsiderately, or from want of information, but one who, as representing the pope in these kingdoms, as supporting the character of a bishop, must be expected to speak with deliberation and not without the prospect of producing some effect. This gentleman has not only in a certain degree contested the fact of the church of Rome being a persecuting church, but has absolutely denied that she has held the [redacted]trine. He has also

gone further, since he has retorted the charge upon the reformed churches, and asserted that the Protestants have not come short of, nay, have surpassed the Papists in the career of persecution[29].

I might ask, in the first place, whence it was that the Protestants derived their ideas as well as their practice of persecution? That some of them in the early periods of the reformation, did persecute, though never to any great extent, is as true, as that it was in them a remnant of

[29] This sort of recrimination is a very favourite topic with Dr. Milner, the gentleman here alluded to. He had urged in the Letters to a Prebendary, and afterwards in the Gentleman's Magazine and elsewhere, that more English Roman catholics had suffered for religion under Elizabeth and in the two succeeding reigns, than there had been put to death of Protestants under queen Mary. I shewed in my "Sequel to the serious Examination," from the very words of Stapleton, the most accredited English Romanist of those days, that the priests who then suffered did not suffer for religion, but for holding the tenet that the pope could by virtue of his spiritual power depose heretical kings: and which tenet he says, "est hodie "capitalis in Angliâ." To which Dr. Milner has not answered a word. The fact is that purely for his religion no Papist was ever executed in this kingdom. Nor even were the least disabilities imposed upon them till pope Pius V. in fact declared war against our Elizabeth, and by calling upon them as his subjects to join in the quarrel, necessarily made their loyalty suspected. See further what I have said note [3] of Sermon IV. I have gone so largely into this question of persecution in the pamphlets already mentioned, that my reader will excuse my generally referring him to them as fully establishing all my positions respecting this head, and standing perfectly unanswered, except by the most general and loose charges of calumny and disingenuousne[illegible]nd other abuse of that sort.

Popish error, which they found it difficult at the beginning entirely to shake off. But as to the fact, it may be sufficient to ask what has lately become of those millions of Protestants with which France, Savoy, Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia once swarmed? By what means were they put down? What was the crime of the thousands and hundreds of thousands who in those countries underwent such dreadful sufferings, but their religion? Indeed if ever any beings suffered purely on account of their religion we may safely aver that such was this case. Their persecutors indeed had in view principally to exalt the pope; but as to the persecuted, their being in opposition to the see of Rome was merely a secondary consideration, and an accidental consequence arising out of their anxiety to maintain what they conceived, and rightly conceived, to be the truth.

So much it may be sufficient to have said as to facts. But, as our business here is chiefly with doctrines, it may be necessary not to pass over so slightly that part of the assertion which relates to them, and to shew that in charging the church of Rome with teaching that it is lawful to persecute we speak most correctly and without exaggeration. It may indeed be shewn that persecution, that is a regular organized system of persecution, is as much the distinguishing characteristic of modern as of ancient

Rome. Nay, I know not that it properly belongs to any other power; for all who in latter times have been persecutors have acted under her influence and in obedience to her decrees. Nor was either the doctrine or the practice followed with any regularity or consistency, till the empire of modern Rome had begun in the extent and magnitude of its pretensions to rival the old. True it is, that many of the disputes about questions of religion which arose in the early ages of the church, produced serious and bloody contests; the Arians in particular persecuted the orthodox, and were persecuted in their turns. Something too of this sort took place among the Greeks in their contests about image-worship. But these instances were very far from being systems, like that which afterwards sprung up and was established under the sanction of the Romish church, extending over vast tracts of countries, always directed to the same end, and under the same leader.

A recurrence to only a few dates and a few facts will clearly shew on which side the truth lies.

First, it should be recollected that the rights of the church, as they are called, or, as we style them, the usurpations of the popes, were first asserted in their full extent by Gregory the 7th, commonly known as pope Hildebrand, who died in the year 1089, and that they were car-

ried to their utmost height by pope Innocent the 3d, who finally established at once the supremacy of the popes and the doctrine of persecution, in the 4th general council of Lateran, held in the year 1215. But this was also the era when the great corruptions of the church first came to have, as it were, a solid establishment: for then was transubstantiation first declared to be an article of faith: then began the mass to be adored: then were the clergy effectually prohibited from marrying: then lastly, was the use of the Scriptures first interdicted[30].

All these abuses, I say, first took place within the era above marked out, that is, between the time of Gregory VII. and that of Innocent III. or a little after. And it was the indignation which they excited which obliged the popes to have recourse to force, as the only means of procuring their universal reception. Thus it became necessary that a general council should solemnly anathematize all heresies contrary to what they had laid down; and that they should

[30] See Usher de Christianarum Ecclesiarum Successione et statu. c v. before referred to. The last article of denying the Scriptures to the laity, I find first solemnly ordered in the council of Thoulouse, and before the pope's legate, A. D. 1229. See Fleury's E. H. b lxxix. § 58. I might have added that it was within this period that the oath which the Romish bishops now take and by which they in so many particulars subject themselves to the absolute authority of the pope was first framed. See the oath and observations upon it. Sequel to the serious Examination, and Appendix.

enjoin all princes and rulers to join in extirpating all those whom they thus marked out as heretics: and the better to induce those temporal sovereigns to be active in the execution of this duty, indulgences were held out on the one hand as rewards, and on the other the terror of being themselves deprived of their dominions, if they were negligent in executing the commands of the church. Then also was established the inquisition, a tribunal than which a more effectual engine for the destruction both of soul and body was never devised by human malignity.

From that period therefore and under the pressure of such a tyranny, we might well expect, as was the fact, that few should retain either the ability or the courage to call in question the doctrines which were proposed to them. And thus the notions of purgatory and indulgences with all their abuses came to be implicitly received, and the doctrine of seven sacraments, first agitated by the schoolmen in the eleventh century, was finally made an article of faith by the council of Trent[31].

[31] In this council also the jurisdiction of the pope over his brether bishops was carried to a greater height than before, and they were in fact made his vassals. See my Reply to Dr. Milner's Observations, p. 181. It was also, as I apprehend, in consequence of the powers vested in him by this council, that the oath which is taken by the priests and members of monkish orders was drawn up by Pius IV. which oath and observations upon it, see also in Sequel and Appendix.

How notwithstanding, by the blessing of God, many nations were enabled to emancipate themselves from this bondage, and to cleanse themselves from these abominations, I am not now called upon to detail; but there are two or three material observations which a recurrence to those early ages may naturally suggest.

First, it may be remarked, in answer to those advocates for the church of Rome, who ask us where was our church before Luther; that in reality there was no time when there did not exist a certain number of Christians who condemned the doctrines of that church, and asserted their right of serving God according to his word. For, in respect to the doctrine of transubstantiation in particular, it is clear that it was not formally declared an article of faith until the thirteenth century: and then only so declared in opposition to certain persons who were called heretics for refusing to admit it; and who must be taken to have been numerous and powerful, since extraordinary levies of troops and the co-operation of sovereigns were thought to be necessary for their suppression. In truth, it was only towards the close of the ninth century, that the doctrine was with any distinctness published or insisted upon; and then only by an individual. Paschasius Radbertus, the author of it, himself evidently betrays a consciousness of its being a novelty. No sooner in-

deed, did his book appear than it was answered by Ratramn of Corbie, writing under the orders of the Emperor Charles the bald, who expressly maintains the presence of our Lord in the eucharist to be merely figurative, in strict conformity to what is now held by the church of England. Though the tenet afterwards gained ground, yet in the eleventh century it was openly combated by Berenger. He was followed by Peter de Bruis and his disciple Henry, who were succeeded closely by the Waldenses and Albigenses; if indeed we are not rather to consider that there existed at all times both in territory of Alby and in the vallies of Piedmont, a body of men zealous for the gospel and "holding the truth" in incorruption. For it is remarkable that the old Romish historian of the war with the Albigenses[28], speaks of Toulouse as having from its very foundations been infected with what he calls heretical pravity and infidel superstition. And Reinerius, an inquisitor in those days, speaking of those whom he was persecuting, mentions as one of their peculiarities, the length of time which the sect had subsisted, as some said from the days of pope Sylvester and according to others from the very days of Christ. It has also been demonstrated

[28] Pierre de Vaux Cernay, or Petrus de Valle Sernensi, see his book almost at the beginning. "Hæc Tolosa valde dolosa statim "a fundamentis, &c."

by a learned divine of our communion, that the churches of Piedmont, that is the church of Milan, and the subalpine churches, were not only independent of the pope till long after the period which we are speaking of, but that they held the same doctrines which the Waldenses were afterwards charged with holding[33].

I come next to the grounds upon which it is now urged that persecution is no tenet of the Romish church; and in particular the assertion that the third canon of the 4th council of Lateran, was a mere temporal canon of discipline and of no force among those nations who did not receive it. This may well astonish us as coming from those men who have expressly sworn the most unreserved obedience to all the decrees and all the provisions whatever of every pope and of every council. It is the more peculiarly extraordinary, since at other times the very same men, wishing to throw off the odium of that measure from their church upon the

[33] Dr. Allix in his remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the churches of Piedmont, London, 1690. See my Reply to the Observations of Dr. Milner, p. 142. Dr. Milner being now I suppose constrained to drop the apology made by him for the council of Lateran, that its 3d canon was directed against such monsters as would not now be suffered to live, meaning the Albigenses, and it having been proved by me that these supposed heretics were neither immoral, nor persecuted for any immorality, but for their faith; has now made another discovery. In his last publication (Inquiry, &c. p. 78) he intimates that this same 3d canon of that council was a temporary ordinance regarding the feudal rights of the Albigenses!!

laity, lay a great stress upon that council being attended by all the great powers in Europe, either in person or by their representatives. Nor will it contribute much to establish the credit of the gentleman who principally urges this plea, that he has asserted that the decrees of that council were never received in this country. Whereas not only it was here acted upon, not only the statute of Henry IV. for burning heretics was passed in pursuance of it, but the whole of its provisions were formally adopted in a council held at Oxford in the year 1222[84].

[84] Those readers who are strangers to the assertions lately made on behalf of the Romanists, should be informed that Dr. Milner, in arguing that the 4th council of Lateran had nothing to do with the burning of our first reformers, urged that they suffered as Protestants, and that there existed no such description of men as Protestants in the 12th century. In answer to this I shewed that they (Cranmer, Ridley, and the rest) were burned as heretics, and for the particular heresy (so called) of denying transubstantiation. He further urged "that they were burned by virtue of the Act de Hæ-"retico conburendo, passed in 2 Henry IV. without any solicita-"tion from the clergy." Upon which I produced first the act itself which expressly recited an application of the clergy, "Cum "ex parte prælatorum et cleri sit ostensum (Sequel xxxiv)". and afterwards the very petition itself of the clergy, and the king's answer (Reply 135). The doctor, however, still insisting in his observations on the Sequel, that the decrees of that council were never received in this kingdom, I produced (Reply, p. 132) the words of the council of Oxford, mentioned in the text, for which see "Wilkins's Concilia, Vol. i. p. 585. and Du Pin's E. H. 13th century, p. 105. Dr. Milner having also insisted that John Huss and Jerome of Prague were burnt in the same manner by virtue of the old laws of the empire only, and not by the

But can any thing be more monstrous than this supposed distinction between doctrine and discipline? If a council order that men of certain descriptions shall be extirpated, does it not, in the most pointed manner, declare that it is lawful, nay, that it is an act of duty to extirpate men of that description? What reasonable being ever made a difference between the declaratory part of the law, and the punishment or penalty by which the observance of it is secured? But will these gentlemen tell us what description they affix to the hundreds of bulls issued by successive popes, and among others the bull in Cœnâ Domini, by which all heretics were

council of Constance, or any ecclesiastical authority, it may be right to add that these same old laws, that is, the constitution of the Emperor Frederick the 2d (see Letter to a Prebendary, p. 126), were in fact enacted, not only at the instance of the pope, and directly in pursuance of the 3d canon of the 4th of Lateran, but solemnly ratified by Honorius III. with the usual denunciation of the vengeance of Almighty God, and of the apostles Peter and Paul, against all those who shall in any way infringe them. See these constitutions in the Corpus Juris Civilis ad calc. There were no less than eight councils in France, held within thirty years after the 4th council of Lateran, confirming and enforcing its edicts. And its canons, as all the other genuine epistles or decrees of popes, contained in the decretals, were confirmed in the council of Constance, as being of equal authority with the writings of the apostles. In the 5th council of Lateran, Sess. 9, the same doctrine was recognised, it being ordered that "Heretics and Judaizers should be "prosecuted by the Inquisition." And in truth the bulls issued in Cœnâ Domini, by all popes, in latter ages, are only, as I have shewn, in Reply, p. 169, a sort of proclamation founded upon the canons of that council.

devoted to destruction; and in which the clergy were directed to stir up the laity to that good work of persecution? What is meant by dogmatical constitutions of popes, if such bulls as these be not included under that description? Indeed if this be no doctrine, why do they hesitate to say at once that the councils and the popes who enjoined the practice did err[35]?

Again, as to the pretence that the laity are chargeable as persecutors, and not the clergy, because the former were present at the council,

[35] I shall here add only one more proof that persecution is a doctrine of the Romish church, out of the mouth of one of her most famous doctors. In his second homily on St. George's day, Eckius, the great adversary of Luther, commenting on John, xv. comes to the 6th verse; upon which he has these remarkable words, "Qualis porro sit hic expectandus finis deincips ostendit dominus, "et ait, si quis in me non manserit mittetur foras sicat palmes, "et arescet, et colligent eum et in ignem mittunt et ardet. Solent "subinde conqueri hœretici et quærere cur tandem comburantur? "Ecce hic eis causam ad literam, quia justé non permanent. Vere "enim ad hæreticos refertur." "The heretics are wont to com- "plain, and to ask why, after all, are they to be burned? Behold "an authority for it, even according to the strict letter!!!" Homiliar. Eckian. part iii. p. 946. The book is dedicated, by permission, to Clement the 7th. The reader will observe, that the heretics complained of the practice even in those times, instead of retaliating; and, in fact, when was there ever a papist burned as a heretic? that is, after being pronounced to be a heretic by an ecclesiastical judge. I have purposely abstained from observing upon the popish doctrine, that kings may be deposed by popes, or slain by their subjects, after such deposition, because it has become in some sort a political question, and because, in my pamphlets above referred to, I have gone into it so much at large.

either in person, as princes, or as embassadors; and because (which is another pretence) the clergy are forbidden to judge in any cause of blood; Is not this something still more futile, nay, destructive of the former plea? For we know that the laity have no voice in councils: they are there, and they in fact assisted at the lateran council, merely as witnesses, or as vassals, in order to receive the directions of their spiritual fathers. And this being the case, the fathers of the council having only to declare what was to be done, and the emperors and kings being bound to act upon it, who shall deny that what was thus declared was, in the strictest sense, doctrine? that it was most strictly what was intended to be taken as the divine, and not as human law?

And as to the miserable subterfuge that the clergy have nothing to do with such executions, because they are bound by the canons to have no concern in the shedding of blood. What is this but the plea of a felon, who having employed a child to set fire to his neighbour's house, when charged with the crime, should insist that the act was none of his?

Indeed the mock solemnity with which these spiritual judges, after having made the adjudication which infallibly dooms the unfortunate culprit to the flames, recommend mercy to the temporal magistrate, who receives him at their

hands without any power to act, but according to the course which they have prescribed, this, I say, is hypocrisy so barefaced, that I must believe it will rise up in judgment against them, before God, as a great aggravation of their otherwise deep guilt.

In truth I know not, after all, if this single tenet of persecution ought not to be considered as the most sure mark of Anti-Christ. Certainly it must operate as the most decisive reason against uniting with any church by whom it is maintained. Could we persuade ourselves that we might innocently submit to all the fopperies and the tricks which are daily practised by Romanists, under the name of devotions; could we bear to be present while images are worshipped, and bread and wine receive the adoration which is only due to God; yet we could never conceive ourselves justified in pronouncing, and in compelling others to pronounce that all this is right and sound doctrine; in thus calling "good "evil; and evil good*." But there is no medium allowed by the church of Rome. We must be wholly hers, or be by her devoted to destruction.

Indeed the deliberation, and the circumstances with which her anathemas are pronounced, are among the most prominent and

* Isaiah, v. 20.

horrible of her blasphemies; and, as if this were not sufficient of itself, she increases the impiety by derogating from the divine Majesty in the very act, while she devotes her victims to the vengeance of Peter and Paul in the same breath with that of God[36].

Such are a few of the particulars by which we prove our separation from the church of Rome to rest on grounds very different from any which can be alledged by our fellow Protestants for separating from us. So flagrant indeed are these abuses, so manifest these corruptions, that, as we have seen, fully to justify them has baffled the arts of even the most subtle advocates of that church. Unable to support any argument on the justice of the case, they have endeavoured to silence us by recrimination. They bring forward, and exaggerate our differences among ourselves. The variations of the Protestant churches have been a favourite theme with those who could no otherwise recommend an implicit submission to the "commandments "of men." Deeply indeed must we lament the divisions which have torn the church in these, as in the former days; with concern we must observe, that no era of Christianity has been

[36] Such is the conclusion of all papal bulls: "Indignationem "omnipotentis Dei et beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum ejus "se noverit incursurum."

totally exempt from that misfortune. Nor indeed has this been in any degree less the case with the church of Rome than with any other churches. Yet deeply as we must regret our share of this calamity, anxious as we all should be to repair the breaches which have been made in the unity of our ecclesiastical establishment, we cannot but see that no peace can be desirable but such as rests upon solid foundations, such as is built upon the divine word, and not upon human inventions. To trust in these is "in vain to worship God*." It is not indeed by sacrificing the truth that any real union can be established.

There is, however, nothing in all this to prevent, but rather much to enforce, the propriety of our agreeing where we can agree; in rejecting and condemning at least what we all (I speak of Protestants at large) agree should be rejected and condemned. It is a great step to wisdom, even to heavenly wisdom, to keep clear of that which is manifest folly. You must therefore, I trust, approve of the anxiety with which I entreat you to bear in mind the state of darkness from which we have escaped. You will join your charitable, nay fervent, wishes to mine, for the conversion of our misguided brethren of the Popish communion; you will pray

* Matt. xv. 9.

that they may at length hear that warning voice, those awful, yet gracious words, which have such a manifest reference to the church of Rome, that I scruple not to apply them in their full extent, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not "partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not "of her plagues*."

* Revel. xviii. 4.

SERMON VII.

HEBREWS xiii. 8.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

THE immutability which, in this passage, is so directly ascribed to our Lord, is, in various other parts of Scripture, most expressly, as you may well remember, declared to belong to God only. And this is material to be remembered; for the consequence is obvious; and it will hold good, whether we consider the proposition as applying to our Lord's person, to his promises, or his doctrine; for undoubtedly it can be said of no creature, more especially it can be said of no human being, that in any of these points he

is unchangeable. This glorious attribute is, and must be confined to the Deity, to the great "Father of Lights*," whose self existence, whose infinite power, and infinite wisdom, as they must have been fully and equally perfect at all times, can and could be subject neither to increase nor diminution, but must have been the same throughout all ages. In him, therefore, I repeat it, and in him only, with whom, according to this, and other passages, Christ must consequently be one, we are rightly told, that there is no variableness, "neither shadow "of turning†."

That indeed this is not the nature and property of man, as the experience of every day cannot but convince us, so may we see it most strikingly exemplified in the history of that period, to which I am now, in the course of my subject, naturally led to refer. The age of the Reformation, as it is marked by many and singular benefits of which it was productive to mankind, so does it abound with numerous proofs of the imbecility inherent in human nature, its want of steadiness, and proneness to error. In the act of emerging from darkness, we see the first reformers unable (as it were) to bear the light. The effulgence which at once broke in upon them, one would suppose,

* James, i. 17. † Ib. 18.

dazzled their sight, and prevented their seeing many of the objects presented to them in the same point of view; and hence it happened that that entire agreement and union did not take place which was so desirable, and might have been expected. When the existence and enormity of abuses were equally apparent and confessed, we might well have hoped that those who were unanimous in condemning and combating them, would be content to proceed to their removal by the same means, and with the same spirit.

To take away that which is corrupt, and to leave that which is sound, to let the tree stand after it is freed from its rotten branches, seems to be the mode in all such cases, not only the most fit and natural to be pursued, but likely to be attended with the least difficulty. It is the mode which we say, and, we trust, with reason say, was happily pursued in this country. Could it have been pursued in other countries also, not only a greater and a more strict union would have prevailed among the reformed churches in general, but in the individual churches themselves much less occasion, or rather no occasion at all, for schism would have been ministered.

Unfortunately, however, that took place which is common upon other occasions, that men flew from one extreme to the other; from the most abject slavery, they passed to the

wildest liberty. And indeed this is perhaps the hardest trial to which a human being can be subjected. It is at least the most severe test of strength in the moral, as well as in the physical world, to restrain exertion within its due bounds. In all cases where it is called upon to put forth its utmost powers, the mind, as well as the body of man, is apt to overshoot the mark, to be hurried beyond its proper object.

Hence it was that with many individuals, nay, with many bodies of men, the odium which had been so justly excited by the corruptions of popery was extended to many particulars with which they had in reality no sort of connection. Matters the most indifferent were pronounced to be an abomination; ceremonies the most innocent, nay edifying, were cried down, because they had been used by the ministers of the Romish church, because in their descent from the remotest antiquity they had been handed down through those, whose touch was now to be considered as in every act of them communicating pollution and disease.

Nor was this all. The infirmity of man shewed itself also in those jealousies, "those oppositions "of science*," if I may so use the term, which have in all ages been the fruitful source of such inveterate dissentions. The glaring and enor-

* 1 Tim. vi. 20.

mous abuses which, in my last three lectures, I pointed out, as most prominently distinguishing the church of Rome, were indeed equally condemned by all the Reformers; but still upon two or three points of Christian doctrine, differences, or rather shades of opinion arose, which, as they were with great heat maintained on the one side and on the other, produced among the first leaders of the Protestant churches dissentions but too violent, and at once destructive of union, and prejudicial to the common cause. The doctrine of transubstantiation, for example, was indeed disclaimed by all; but the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament was differently understood by the different individuals. In particular Luther, from a partial adherence to old ideas, came to entertain the notion of what he termed consubstantiation: he held that the body and blood of Christ substantially existed in the sacrament, though not alone, but united with the bread and wine; so that both the one and the other were taken by the communicants. This approached so near to the popish doctrine, it so naturally led to all the same consequences, that we cannot wonder at its being rejected by Zuinglius, and other eminent Reformers[1]. Besides this, those great

[1] In consequence of which they were most unmercifully abused by Luther, as the Romanists do not fail to remind us. It is remarkable, that in Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, the word

points of predestination and free will, and the extent of divine grace, which, after their agitation by St. Austin, and his immediate successors, had been, as it were, laid by, and only furnished matter of speculation for the schools, now came again to be held forth as distinguishing tenets of sects, and from that time began to trouble and to divide the Protestant world.

It is well known with what heat and animosity the several parties maintained the contest which rose out of these, and the like questions. They who had been so heartily united in opposition to the tyranny of the see of Rome, all at once shewed a disposition to embrace one of the worst of its tenets. The Lutherans persecuted the Calvinists; while Calvin, on the other hand, was not backward in enforcing, by all the means in his power, a conformity to his opinions. In the mean time other sects arose, which revived ancient and almost forgotten heresies. The divinity of our Saviour, after an interval of near a thousand years, was again impugned; and in some cases the very foundations of civil society were directly attacked, and the standard of rebellion against the lawful magistrate was openly reared.

To these contests, upon points of doctrine,

"consubstantiation" is not to be found, which betrays a consciousness that the doctrine is not defensible, though as a Lutheran he could not expressly give it up.

were added other differences upon matters of discipline. In those countries, where the actual rulers of the church kept aloof from the Reformation, or were reckoned among its enemies, it became necessary to supply their place by other governors of the same, or of a different description. Unfortunately, I say unfortunately, more especially with a reference to my present subject, since undoubtedly every departure from antiquity could not but give a wider opening to schism, unfortunately in many places the most violent mode, and that which was most opposed to the uniform practice of ages, was adopted. Because the bishops of Rome, under colour of the authority which they derived from their office, had been guilty of so many usurpations, and exercised such tyranny, it was hastily concluded by some ardent spirits that all episcopacy was usurping and tyrannous in its nature. Because the corruptions of the Romish church had grown up under the government of a bishop, it was most unwarrantably concluded that corruption was inseparable from such a form of hierarchy. To justify these conclusions, the literal text of Scripture was called in, where, as it was asserted, no appropriation could be found of the word bishop, to that character and office which bishops in our days have borne, and still bear; and thus an argument, or rather a pretence, was established for the abolition of the

order, and the substitution of another form of church-government[2].

Still, in the adoption of this very material innovation—for innovation I must take leave to call it, much variety prevailed; nor were the same measures adopted, or the alteration carried to the same length in all places. With some of the Lutheran churches the very name of bishop, or of superintendant, remains; and in the rest, a certain pre-eminence, or superiority, is reserved to one person, over the members of their consistories, approaching, as we are told, in a greater or less degree to the usage of antiquity[3].

[2] Yet even by some of those who were decidedly against the present system of episcopacy, testimony was borne in favour of its antiquity and usefulness, when exercised after what they conceived to be the primitive and apostolic manner. See the famous passage in Calvin's Treatise de Necessitate Reformandæ Ecclesiæ, where he says, "Talem nobis hierarchiam si exhibeant, in quâ sic emineant "episcopi, ut Christo subesse non recusent; ut ab illo, tanquam "unico capite pendeant et ad ipsum referantur: in quâ sic inter "se fraternam societatem colant, ut non alio nodo quam ejus veri-"tate sint colligati; tum vero nullo non anathemate dignos fatear, "si qui erunt, qui non eam revereantur, summâque obedientiâ "observent." Calv. Opera, tom. viii. p. 60. See also his Confessio Fidei, at p. 95, "Fatemur ergo episcopos sive pastores reve-"renter audiendos," &c. Baxter's sentiments were notoriously the same. See his Life and Abridgment passim. He (as well as others of his sect) was only for putting the order upon a new, and what he thought a better footing. See Calamy's Abridgment, p. 81.

[3] See Mosheim, vol. iv. p. 287. Though as to this there appears, even from his account, to be a great degree of variation and uncertainty.

Even in the first establishment of what is called the Presbyterian form of church-government, something, nay a great portion of the same order was preserved. At least we know that Calvin exercised at Geneva, in his capacity of moderator, an authority full as extensive, and even, in fact, as absolute as was ever claimed by any bishop. He did indeed at his death recommend that the same authority should not be continued for life in any other person; and his advice being followed, that which was made an annual office only, soon lost a great share of its importance and dignity, till in process of time an almost perfect equality was established among the several members of that communion.

With such food for dissention, so early ministered, both in point of discipline and of doctrine, with so many and such warm disputes carried on between the great leaders of the Reformation, so kept up, and so perpetuated by the different denominations under which their respective followers were ranged, we must not wonder if much cause for scandal was engendered; if, more particularly, other sectaries, of a turbulent and ambitious spirit, with views less pure, and minds less informed, led the way to new doctrines, and gave into all manner of disorders. To what extravagant lengths some of these false apostles proceeded, what civil, as well as religious mischiefs they caused, may be seen

in history, of which they form one of the black pages[4]. From these, and other excesses of the like sort, it is well, if we learn the wholesome lesson, not rashly to depart from received opinions, or abolish forms long observed; seeing that by every such instance we weaken the restraints which the laws impose upon the unruly appetites of men, and give scope to that rage for novelty and wildness of speculation, which are so readily made subservient to the purposes of vanity, of ambition, or of covetousness.

I have thus touched upon the state of the reformed churches abroad, at the era of the Reformation, not as pretending to give a detailed account of them; but because, in many respects, their history is connected with that of our national church; more especially it was from them that was taken that aversion to our discipline which occasioned the first, and, for a century, the only schism by which she was rent. It was to Calvin, and his successors, that the old puritans made their appeal; it was according to his notions that they wished our establishment to be modelled.

I must, at the same time, observe, that whatever might be Calvin's objections to many of the rites and practices of our church after she was reformed, how much soever he might wish

[4] Particularly the shocking excesses of the Anabaptists in Holland, as well as in Germany.

that she had formed herself after the model which he had devised, he never encouraged her individual members in separating from her communion, or affecting any sort of independence upon their ecclesiastical rulers. Indeed he was himself but too rigid in exacting conformity within the pale of his jurisdiction; he suffered no one to declare, or hardly to entertain any opinion contrary to his own in religious matters. He drove from the city, and territory over which he presided, and even punished with greater severity all those who shewed the least disposition to oppose his authority, or to question the soundness of his doctrine. He could not therefore, without contradicting the whole tenour of his administration, have in the slightest degree abetted any man in setting up his private opinion against the professed rule of discipline established in the country where he lived. This was likewise the case with Luther, and his followers. They were not less severe than others in condemning, nay persecuting every deviation, either in form or in substance, from the standard which they had set up.

They were indeed fully sensible of the great evils of schism, as well with respect to churches as to individuals. Many attempts were therefore made by them to reconcile their differences, either by coming into each others' opinions, or by ascertaining upon what points men might

safely differ, without such difference becoming a necessary cause of separation. That these attempts should have failed at the time will not appear strange to those who have observed with what obstinacy we are all apt to adhere to opinions which we have once delivered, more especially in questions of a religious or abstruse nature. But all these discussions of what are called fundamentals, all these inquiries into the points of faith, which must indispensably be holden in contradiction to those which are indifferent, and should make no breach of communion, are material to be kept in mind, as they bear upon the subject which we are discussing: as they tend to shew that nothing but what concerns the very essence of our faith can justify us in separating from the church to which we belong[5]. For if there were not an obligation laid upon every one of us to be at unity with one another, and of course to submit ourselves to them that have the rule in ecclesiastical matters, while we can do it with safety to our soul,

[5] See what was attempted in this way by Melanchthon, and others, in Germany. Mosheim, vol. iv. pp. 326, 345, and v. 269. See also the result of a similar attempt made under the protectorate in this kingdom, in Calamy's Abridgment of Baxter's Life, p. 120. Baxter's idea was, to propose the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, as the essentials or fundamentals of Christianity. These were also the fundamentals of Dury, or Duræus, who at this very time was travelling about Europe on the fruitless errand of reconciling all the Protestant churches. Mosheim, v. 277, and Bayle.

any such inquiry as this which I have mentioned would have been nugatory and impertinent. It would have been mere solemn trifling to ask what are fundamentals, and what are indifferent points in doctrine, if it was open to any man to say "I care not what other persons "think upon such subjects, I will be bound by "no form, I will worship God according to my "own fancy."

That this was not the mode of reasoning adopted by our church at the Reformation, as you see it was not that of the other reformers, I have abundantly shewn in my former discourses. It remains for me shortly to point out to you how it has happened that to us, as to other nations, reformation came accompanied with disunion; how in taking away known and inveterate evils, a way was made for the letting in of mischiefs of another sort.

Both the mode and progress of the Reformation, it may first be observed, were very different in this country from what happened with other nations. In the first place, with us it began at the head. It was not a comparatively obscure and unauthorised individual who first questioned, and put down the usurped dominion of the pope; but it was the actually existing government, the king himself, who, with the concurrence of the legislature, and of his subjects at large, resumed those rights of which his

predecessors had been stripped, and which had from himself been withheld. Secondly, the work begun did not go on without interruption. On the contrary, it received very material checks, as well from the capricious humour of Henry, as from that dispensation of Providence which suffered the kingdom, after being once emancipated, to fall again under the bondage of superstition, which tried the faith of our first reformers by all the severity of persecution.

I mention these facts, not as authorising any particular claim of merit for our church or our sovereigns on that score. I enter not into the question of the motives by which Henry was actuated in his quarrel with the pope, but I point them out as accounting for the circumstances which are at this day peculiar to the church of England. To these it was owing that the changes which took place were not made without much deliberation, that every measure was fully considered before it was finally adopted; that, under the blessing of God, advantage was taken of the experience of other nations, as well as of the wisdom and judgment which might be found at home. Hence it was that less of violence was used in the correction of abuses, less of spoliation took place in respect of the possessions of the church[6]; and more of the ancient

[6] I believe it will be found, upon examination, that in taking away episcopacy, the sovereigns of Germany were greatly influenced

form of discipline, as well as of the accustomed rites and ceremonies, was retained with us, than with any other people. It may lastly be remarked, that the very establishment of the supremacy in the crown, while it kept down the turbulence of those spirits who would have run into every extreme of doctrine, did also, by the very stability which it gave to the system, enable the government with safety to allow a freer course to the discussion of religious questions; in other words, to be more tolerant than the fashion of the times in other countries endured. I say this, well aware of the laws which bore hard, and the severities which were sometimes exercised upon the puritans, because those who would still fix the charge of intolerance upon the English church of that day, may be asked in what country, at that time, was it allowed that any sect or body of men should stand forth in

by the prospect of appropriating to themselves the possessions belonging to the different sees. It was also with a view to the same kind of robbery that Leicester, and other courtiers of Elizabeth, countenanced and supported the puritans. This was very well understood by the latter, who, in consequence, failed not to enlarge upon the great riches possessed by the heads of the church. "Come off you bishops," one of them cried, "away with your "superfluities, yield up your thousands, be content with hundreds, "as they be in other churches, where be as great learned men as "you are. Let your portion be priest-like, and not prince-like. "Let the Queen have the rest of your temporalities, and other "lands, to maintain those wars which you procured." See Peirce's Vindication, part 1st, p. 107, who cites this with approbation.

opposition to the established discipline of their national church, that they should introduce and keep up a peculiar form of worship of their own. This was not, as I again repeat, the case with the nations which embraced either the Calvinistic or the Lutheran communion. And if we further consider the sort of language which was used by the puritans, their open contempt of authority, the manner in which they reviled the acknowledged rulers of the congregation, their engagements to each other to use all their endeavours to get their scheme of religion or further reformation adopted, we shall hardly be able to pronounce them wholly guiltless of those factious practices which are properly cognizable by law; still less shall we wonder if in that age when the rights of sovereign and people were not weighed with any great accuracy they were subjected to penalties or to treatment somewhat more arbitrary than what we should at this moment approve[7].

[7] That however there were some positions maintained by them which could not but render them objects of jealousy to any government, needs no stronger proof than the admission of one of the great champions for unbounded church liberty. In his Confessional, archdeacon Blackburne, after mentioning the opinion of the Calvinists in Holland, "that the civil magistrate who did not do his "duty in his province," (viz enforcing the church's decisions, discouraging and suppressing sects and heresies) "ceased to be a "child of God, and might be deposed from his office," adds, "It "cannot be denied that many of the English puritans entertained

That indeed nothing was endured by these men which they would not have inflicted upon others under the same circumstances was, as I have already observed, clearly proved by their conduct, when afterwards in the time of the great rebellion, they not only brought about the adoption of their favourite mode of ecclesiastical government, but did all in their power to deprive every individual of the episcopal clergy, first of his character, and afterwards of his means of living.

Indeed it was the very moderation of our church which indisposed the puritans to her communion. Their alleged ground of complaint against her was that she still retained the trappings of popery, that she used many ceremonies and kept up many practices which they considered as superstitious.

On these objections which they thus entertained to the doctrine or rather to the discipline of the established religion, I need not, I trust, dwell at any length. For who is there in these days that will seriously maintain that the wearing of a surplice, the making of the

" the same notions: perhaps the greatest part of them in secret. " When any extraordinary countenance was shewn to papists, either " by James, or indeed before him by Elizabeth, the puritans gave " no obscure intimations of what they thought of the government, " and the less discreet among them openly avowed the lawfulness " of resisting ungodly princes, both in the reigns of Elizabeth and " James." Blackb. Works, Vol. v. pp. 396, 397.

sign of the cross in baptism, the observance of a few festivals in commemoration of those particular acts in which our Lord's mercy and goodness towards us were most signally displayed, or in honour of his immediate followers and acknowledged saints, or, lastly, a few expressions in our liturgy which involved no corruption of the faith, and are, as we say, justified by Scripture itself, who will now insist that these or any other such unimportant particulars could form a sufficient excuse for schism? Nay, who will now seriously maintain that there is any sort of warrant in the New Testament for the preference which they gave to the presbyterian over the episcopal form of government?

As to the progress of these opinions, it is well known that although in the beginning of the reformation and under the reigns of Henry the 8th and Edward the 6th, there were a few individuals who shewed a disposition to quarrel with the number and quality of the ancient ordinances which were retained in the church at that time, yet they did not possess influence or weight sufficient to interest any considerable part of the nation in favour of their sentiments. It was only in consequence of the persecution under queen Mary, and owing to it, that the aversion or rather abhorrence which was then so deservedly excited against popery began to

extend itself to every thing which appeared in any degree to be connected with what were rightly called its abominations. And even this disposition only gathered strength to display itself from the connexion which was formed by many of the exiles under that persecution, with some of the leading members of the reformed churches abroad. In particular, the reception which some of those early confessors and sufferers for the truth met with at Geneva and in places similarly disposed, led them to entertain a strong attachment to the form of discipline which was established in that country. They did indeed at once embrace all the violence with all the principles of Calvin. A part of those principles, however, as we have already seen, consisted in the strict observance of whatever ecclesiastical government was established, and of course these men were as decided enemies to any thing which they considered to be schismatical as the most zealous advocates for episcopacy could be. Their object, as it was avowed by them as soon as the increase of their numbers and the ascertaining of their sentiments gave them boldness to make any common declaration, was "to bring" what they called "the reformation into the church[s]." They nei-

[s] "About this time (1572) Chark, Travers, Gardner, Barber, "Chester, Cook, and Edgerton, joined the rest of the puritan fac- "tion in order to the settling of their discipline. After some de-

ther conceived nor announced that, strictly speaking, in any nation or among any people there could or ought to be more than one church: or that, as it was afterwards expressed, "a church or churches could be gathered out "of a true church." Uniformity in ecclesiastical discipline was all along the prevailing idea with them as with their contemporaries. It continued so to be, nay, to be the only one entertained, down to, and even after the memorable period, when, in the reign of our Charles the first, the descendants and successors of these men entered into that famous engagement called the solemn league and covenant; in the very terms of which it evidently appeared that no departure had in this respect taken place from the strictest notions professed by the first reformers respecting conformity. For by this covenant they who took it engaged that they would endeavour to extirpate not only "popery "and prelacy," (that is the government of the church by archbishops, bishops, deans, and

"bate upon the question they came to the following resolutions: "That forasmuch as divers books had been written and sundry "petitions exhibited to her majesty, the parliament, and their lord-"ships, every man should therefore labour by all means possible to "bring the reformation into the church." It was likewise further resolved, "That for the better bringing in of the said holy discip-"line, they should not only as well privately as publicly teach it, "but by little and little, as well as possibly they might, draw the "same into practice." Collier's Eccl. Hist. V. ii. p. 541.

their officers) not only "superstition, heresy, "and profaneness," but "schism." Thus clearly by the most manifest implication condemning every division in the church which was not the result of necessity; and thus also most forcibly disclaiming for themselves any such liberty as in our days is contended for, of professing what faith any man pleases, of separating from the congregation as often as we choose or in whatever way we think proper[9].

True it is that, in the progress of that great and striking combination of schism from the church and rebellion against the sovereign which then or soon after gained the upper hand, in the course of that opposition to all authority, whether ecclesiastical or civil, which brought our monarch to the block, that took place which always happens in times of such confusion, that every man being set up as "a judge and a di- "vider," being called upon to pronounce condemnation upon the errors of his rulers, naturally took the liberty to form a system of his own as well in religious as in other matters; and to indulge in every wild theory which his ima-

[9] See the material clauses of this solemn league and covenant in Collier, Vol. ii. p. 859, and the whole more at length in Baxter's life, by Sylvester, p. 391. One of their engagements was that they would not suffer themselves to be withdrawn, "whether to make "defection to the contrary part, or to give themselves to a detest- "able indifferency or neutrality in that cause," &c.

gination could form: that in consequence, a number of sectaries arose, each claiming a right to form separate and independent congregations unconnected with, and not to be controlled by others, and not owning any common form of discipline or of doctrine, nor admitting any community of that sort to be at all essential or necessary. But it is also true that as long as that party which entertained the old puritan principles, and was in the beginning considered as the only one in opposition to the episcopal establishment, which did in fact erect its own form of ecclesiastical government upon the ruins of the church, as long, I say, as that party retained either strength or authority, it not only would not adopt nor give any sort of countenance to such a latitude in opinion and practice, but even positively refused to allow it a toleration. An application was made on the subject only the year before the king's death, to that assembly of divines which the long parliament had convened as a sort of substitute for the convocation, or as filling the place of that national synod, which according to the ideas of Calvin was to have the supreme rule or direction in ecclesiastical matters[10]. The assembly however refused the application, and upon grounds which are material to be considered.

[10] See Baxter's account of this assembly in his Life by Sylvester, p. 73.

They urge that to grant the request of the Independents would be, in the words before cited, "to allow the lawfulness of gathering churches "out of true churches," and that "it would "encourage perpetual schism and division in "the church, always drawing some off from the "churches under the rule," that is, under the then establishment. "This," they say further, "would encourage animosities between those "who remained, and those who went off." And in another part of the conference they expressly refused to allow the plea of conscience as a motive for such separation, "because this "was what might be alleged by any erroneous "conscience whatsoever*."

Such was the judgment of the then ruling party both in church and state. Such were the opinions of those, who, for the first century after the reformation, were the only considerable or acknowledged opponents of the established discipline of our church. If, notwithstanding the refusal of a toleration, no proceedings were actually had against the Independents, if they continued to hold their meetings unmolested, it must be ascribed to that influence among the people, and particularly with the army, which they contrived to obtain, and which finally put them into pos-

* Collier's Eccl. Hist. Vol. ii. p. 829.

session of power, and enabled them to triumph over all opposition.

Instead of wearying you with any more particular details upon this part of our history, I shall content myself with two or three observations upon what has thus been brought before you.

First it appears, I think with sufficient clearness, according to what I formerly alleged, that, down to nearly the middle of the seventeenth century, there never was, not only any nation, but not any considerable body of men among any people, still less any ruling party or number of persons having authority, which held the tenet now so commonly brought forward of the indifference of all communions, or the licence of arbitrarily and without cause assigned separating from the ecclesiastical establishment of that place to which a man belongs. We shall find even the most inconsiderable bodies among those who dissented from the churches under which they lived, nay, we shall find upon inquiry all the true servants of God who were suffering under persecution, earnest not simply for the liberty of worshipping God in uprightness and sincerity of heart, but for the propagation of the truth, for the removal in others as well as in themselves of that which they conceived to be corruption, and

dangerous, if not damnable sin. We further find them all expressly, whenever they had an opportunity of explaining themselves, even in the very act of separating from their brethren, and however differing in other respects, yet joining in the open and unequivocal condemnation of schism.

Secondly, I would call your attention to the time when, and the circumstances under which the latitudinarian principle was first with any effect avowed and acted upon. The sect indeed of the Independents was not wholly unknown before the days of the rebellion. The Brownists in particular, though disclaimed by their brethren who succeeded them, excited considerable notice in the days of Elizabeth. But their reign was neither long nor widely extended. It was only in the moment of confusion and comparative anarchy, at that juncture of civil warfare, which, as it does violence to the strongest of our social feelings, tends more completely than any other to unhinge the mind, it was then only, I say, when the kingdom was literally "divided "against itself," that any countenance was obtained, or power possessed by those who declared against all subordination or control in the administration of their spiritual concerns. Nor can it be doubted that it was the very wildness and unsteadiness of their principles, their

being so readily "carried about with every "wind of doctrine*," which, as it made them more useful and ready tools for the advancement of Cromwell in his views upon the sovereignty, so it procured them in return that degree of protection and countenance from him which raised them in consequence above their more regular and scrupulous brethren.

Thirdly, we may observe, as we are in Scripture called upon to do, what were the immediate "fruits" of this extreme laxity of principle, when thus recognized and having obtained a kind of solid footing. History will tell us that there was no time when such strange and monstrous tenets were openly and without fear or rebuke maintained. And this we learn not from one class of men, not from the writers of the oppressed church of England only, but from every author who has treated the subject. In particular from two divines of the Presbyterian communion, we have a most disgusting and particular detail of these abominations. Strong as this word is, I must use it, because many of them did in no degree stop short of impiety and blasphemy. By Edwards, in his Gangræna, not less than two hundred of these sects are reckoned up; and the plain and simple account of the pious and honest, though in some respects weak

* Eph. iv. 14.

and erring Richard Baxter, must convince every reasonable man how largely all these sectaries dealt in hypocrisy and self-delusion[11].

Of a tenet which first shewed itself at such a period, which as soon as it gathered strength was attended with such effects, can we be otherwise than distrustful? Must we not say that in this respect, experience has confirmed what is otherwise to be collected from Scripture?

The vanity and unsoundness of these sects, the ranters and the seekers, and so many more, further appear from the little hold which they were able to take upon even the prejudices of men. Of most of them we know nothing but what we read in the history of those times. Independency however, we must admit, not only in its general principle, but in some of its original forms has kept its ground, and indeed very widely extended its empire. It has so increased and acquired such strength as greatly to outstrip its old competitor in the career of schism, and bids fair to throw it entirely into the shade. For you must be aware what a change Presbyterianism has undergone in later times, and even from the age of Baxter. Not only its numbers but its credit have greatly diminished: so that this class of dissenters, which,

[11] See Baxter's account, Life by Sylvester, p. 72, & 102 & Calamy's Abridgment, pp. 89, 98 & seq.

as I have before observed, was originally the most powerful, nay the only one which first raised and maintained itself against the established government, has lost all its weight, and hardly retains a name in this kingdom. If I am not mistaken, the nonconformists of England, at this moment, are generally, if not universally, Independents: they have no synods, or system of discipline, answering to that which was established at Geneva, or which now obtains in Scotland. If they are at all distinguished from one another, it is by their greater or less orthodoxy in doctrine, and perhaps the sort of ordination which they require for their ministers.

As long indeed as there were any of the Presbyterians remaining, so long did they retain their attachment to church discipline, and so long continue both to lament the existing schism, and to testify their readiness to adopt such measures as would restore them to communion with the establishment. Hence the hopes which they entertained at the restoration of Charles the 2d, and the conferences at the Savoy, as well as those which had before taken place at Hampton Court in the reign of James the 1st. As, however, a new set succeeded, and the obtaining of their demands became more and more hopeless, they relaxed by degrees, until at last, towards the end of the 17th century, a union took place

between this class of dissenters and the Independents, which put an end to their differences, and first led the way to that abandonment of fixed principle, which seems to be the great characteristic of all the separatists of the present day[18].

How indeed, by what means, and by what degrees, from that period, the minds, not only of the dissenters, but even of many members of the church, were gradually led to look with indifference upon the progress of schism, and to be less and less sensible of the advantages which result from conformity, and a proper submission to authorised rulers, I have considered somewhat in detail in my first discourse, and need not now repeat. What was there said, also renders unnecessary any further or more regular deduction of the state of our church, or of its history, during the last hundred years. Whatever there was of peculiarity in it, has occasionally been pointed out, and will come to be considered, as I now proceed shortly to bring before you the actual state of the different, or, at least, the most prominent sects, which at present divide this country, and set themselves up in direct hostility to the establishment.

In the very entrance upon this part of my sub-

[18] This agreement took place, and was formally published in the year 1690. See the articles at length in Calamy's Abridgment, p. 476.

ject, however, it is evidently proper to draw one broad line of distinction, and to divide our opponents into two classes; one consisting of those which differ from us upon essential points of doctrine, and the other of those who have no such cause to allege for their separation. And we cannot but note this great difference between them, that, with respect to the former class, if they be really persuaded that the doctrine which they maintain is the true faith, they do rightly in abstaining from our communion. Whereas the latter, even if their objections were ever so well founded, as long as those objections relate to points which are either indifferent, or of trivial moment, will still be guilty of making unnecessary divisions in the church; or, in other words, of actual schism.

We need not here be stopped by the difficulties which the German divines encountered in their attempts to ascertain what were fundamentals in religion, and what were not. The general feeling in this country, for many years, has, if I mistake not, confined the application of the term of heresy to that error, which consists in denying or derogating from the divinity of our Lord. As the persons who hold this error are also those who maintain, and who alone (for I now put the Papists out of the question) maintain the heresy of Pelagius, I believe that this class will, with sufficient precision, include

all those who dissent upon what I consider as essential points. I must be understood, however, as speaking of those whose principles are clearly laid down, and avowed to the world; for it is certain that there are many individuals, and some sects, of which, either from the nature of their tenets, or the obscurity in which they contrive to involve themselves, it is difficult to pronounce whether their conduct partake more largely of heresy or of schism. Some of these also, as the Quakers for instance, by the opinions which they hold respecting the sacraments, may be said most emphatically to excommunicate themselves from all other Christian societies. Of these I must be allowed only incidentally to take notice.

Upon this first class of dissenters I shall now proceed to observe, reserving the consideration of the second class of sectaries, those who appear to me to be more properly schismatical, to my next and concluding discourse.

I am aware indeed that it may be doubted by some whether it comes properly within my plan to take any particular notice of persons, whose offence is not that of pure schism, but something of a more serious and aggravated nature. I grant that heresy is usually considered in a different light from schism, and that according to the restrained and most common sense of the words, they do not fall under the same head.

Yet will it appear that both the nature of the thing, and the course of my argument, require that I should bestow upon the one, as upon the other, in this instance at least, some degree of attention.

In the first place, different as the things themselves may be, yet if they are in fact involved with each other, if the one is in many cases the cause of the other, there will be no possibility of taking a full view of either of them without the other coming in some degree into consideration. Heresy, as I have before observed, may exist without schism. But that only proves the more strongly, that, when it actually does produce schism, it cannot wholly be passed over by those who would trace, through either their causes or effects, the divisions which exist in the church.

I am further led to do this, by the distinction which pressed itself upon me in the course of my argument, when in vindicating the true principles upon which the Reformation proceeded, and urging that it stood upon very different grounds from those upon which any of the dissenters could, or did profess to stand in their separation from us, I admitted that if they could fix upon us any errors, nay, even one error of the sort or magnitude which it was agreed by all Protestants belonged to the church of Rome, there could be nothing said against the

justice of their separation; and I went on to deny that even any attempt of that kind had ever been made by any, excepting only one class of dissenters. But in making the exception I had this very class in my mind, who do in fact impute to us a corruption of doctrine nearly, if not precisely the same as one of those which we charge upon the Romanists.

For you will recollect that one of our objections to the church of Rome is founded upon her invocation of the saints, which we justly regard as a direct breach of the first commandment, as giving to men that honour which belongs only to God, which indeed he has in express words reserved to himself. But this is in fact what is imputed to us by those members of this sect who go the full length of the doctrine, who speak, as most boldly, so most consistently. By them the worship which we pay to Christ is expressly called idolatrous and blasphemous. And, if their tenets be well founded, if they rightly affirm that our Saviour is not God, that there is no warrant in Scripture for the doctrine of the trinity, we must admit that it is not without reason that all this is said, nay, that we are really guilty of the charge which they bring against us.

It is true that this language is not, and cannot be held by a great proportion of this sect; for though they affect to be distinguished by one

common name, there is, and it is a feature to be remarked in all dissenters at this moment, a wonderful variety and discordancy in the opinions which are held among them, as well by congregations as by individuals. Indeed the name of Unitarians (to which, by the way, let it be observed, they have just the same, and no more true right than the Papists have to be exclusively called Catholics) seems to have been adopted by them for the very purpose of uniting those in words who could never unite in substance. It is simply a sort of rallying point against the established church: in every other respect their object and form of proceeding essentially vary among themselves. For, while the followers of Priestley and Evanson thus stigmatise the worship of Christ; by others of them he is adored, and has divine honours paid to him, as much, or nearly as much, as by us. The Arians, for example, through all the degrees which there are of them, allow him to be God, and admit his pre-existence; nay, that he created the world: only they maintain that he was born within time, and that the worship which they pay to him is not exactly the same, but relative and inferior to that which is due to the Father. Socinus also, the great leader of the modern Anti-Trinitarians, overcome by the strong and positive language of Scripture, not only held Christ to be an object of adoration,

though a mere man, but strongly reprobated, if he did not join in persecuting those who were of a different opinion. If now we only consider the various shades of which these several tenets are capable, we may conceive what a vast variety of sentiments must exist among them. Indeed the distinguishing position of the greater part of their writers is, that they ought to have no fixed creed; they conceive that the free spirit of inquiry, which they profess to be always exercising to advantage, must be every day leading them to new discoveries and improvements. And this was actually declared in the only attempt which was ever made at any thing like a regular profession of faith in that communion, or rather, I should say, in any of their communions[13].

[13] The Racovian Catechism, of which see a detailed account in Toulmin's Life of Socinus, p. 257, 259, & seq. I will add a quotation from this author, and another from Dr. Priestley, as illustrative of what I have above said of the variableness or diversity of the Socinian tenets, in their different congregations, and the impropriety of the denomination of Unitarian, as assumed by them. Dr. Toulmin, speaking of some variations of this sort, says, "The "alterations their sentiments underwent were the consequence of "their avowed principles, and the result of the free inquiry they "allowed. The edition of the Catechism I have quoted was dif- "ferent from a preceding publication of that kind, being in some "places altered, in others corrected, and in some instances "abridged. This they own, and their plea is not only a justifica- "tion of those alterations, but a caveat against any censure of any "future change in their religious system," &c. Toulmin's Life of "Socinus, p. 270. Afterwards speaking of Biddle's followers, he

But to my apprehension this is a sort of language, so far from being warranted by Scripture, that, on the contrary, this very fluctuation, and variety of opinion, appears to me to form of itself a very strong presumption against any sect that governs itself by such a principle. Faith.

says, "it does not appear that this society subsisted after his death, "nor have the Socinians made any figure, as a community, in "England. But theological sentiments, nearly resembling the "Socinian system, have been held by various persons, and pro- "bably are daily gaining ground, and of late years have been more "openly avowed, and freely canvassed. Many societies of Pro- "testant dissenters have become communities of professed Unita- "rians, though chiefly upon the Arian scheme; and the Trini- "tarian forms of worship, which are preserved in the church of "England, and which are so closely incorporated with all its ser- "vices, methinks, must form an insuperable objection against "conformity, with all sincere and conscientious Unitarians," &c. All this my reader will see agrees with what I say, except that I do not believe that the numbers of these dissenters are increasing. How too, of all persons, can Arians challenge the particular name of Unitarians? For is not their system expressly that of two gods, the one supreme, and the other subordinate? What can be said for them that may not be urged by the Papist for the worship of saints, or by the Pagan for that of his dii minores? Dr. Priestley in this agrees with me; as may be seen, I think, in his controversy with Dr. Price, and further in his Early Opinions, &c. vol. iv. p. 532-3, where he has this remarkable passage. Assuming first that Dr. Clarke had satisfied the majority of learned Christians in this country, respecting "the supremacy of one God, the Father, "and that Christ is only a creature," that is, that he had made them Arians; he adds, "If learned men will give equal attention "to the subject of this work, we may expect that in an equally "short space of time the controversy between the Arians and Uni- "tarians will be decided." He goes on to intimate what is very true, that Arianism is a "halting between the two opinions."

is always, in Scripture, represented to us as something steadfast and unchangeable. It is, on the other hand, one of the characteristics of error, that it is unstable, and knows not where to fix. And I would put it to you, whether this be not a characteristic mark particularly applicable to schism.

Consider my text, which in more ways than one bears upon this question; and take it with the words which precede, or with those which follow it. The apostle thus exhorts the disciples: "Remember them which have the rule "over you, who," says he, "have spoken the "words of God; whose faith follow, consider- "ing the end of their conversation." Now what is this end of their conversation? "Jesus "Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and "for ever." Something it is, surely, not changing from day to day, but which all the world are, and have been obliged to maintain from the beginning, and will continue to be so bounden to the end. A being, if I may add my comments, whose existence is thus asserted to have been from everlasting; an office to which he was appointed before the worlds; a doctrine which always was, and must remain unchangeable. Some persons there are who, for obvious reasons, refer the text to the words which follow in the next verse: "Be not carried away "with divers and strange doctrines." And so

they reason, that the words "Jesus Christ, the "same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," means only that his doctrine is always the same, and cannot be changed by men[14]. Now were we even to restrict the interpretation of the passage to this one point, for which, however, I see no reason, yet would not this give any effectual support to the cause of our adversaries.

For, let me ask what is this doctrine of Jesus Christ which is "the same yesterday, and to-day, "and for ever," which is thus peculiar to him, which yet was, from the earliest time, and will continue for ever? What is, in other words, this gospel, this "mystery," which, as the apostle tells us, was "kept secret" (it existed, you observe, but was kept secret), "since the world "began; but now" (that is in Christ) "was "made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the "prophets, according to the commandment of "God, made known to all nations for the obe-"dience of faith*." What, I say, was, or could be this mystery, but the cross and passion of Christ, and our redemption through him, the atonement which he made for our sins? A doctrine this, be it now considered, which stands, and can only be built upon the divinity of our Lord; which therefore every Arian and

[14] See Lindsey's Sequel to the Apology, and Dr. Clarke there quoted, p. 281.

* Romans, xvi. 25.

Socinian, every opposer of the orthodox tenet, is by necessary consequence bound to oppose. Where, I say, shall we find any other doctrine peculiar to Christianity? Take this away, and what did our Lord teach, but what Moses, and every teacher of righteousness before him had taught? Will it be said that the moral precepts of the gospel were different from those of the law? The knowledge of God, our duty towards our neighbour, are these also set forth under the new covenant differently from what they were under the old? So far from it, our Lord laid them down, and, as it should seem, studiously so, in the very words of Moses. What then is this doctrine of Christ, I repeat it, but that remission of sins through his blood, which is so explicitly laid down in Scripture, but which it is the constant but fruitless endeavour of every Unitarian to explain away? If indeed Christ, in dying, made not an atonement for our sins, why is his death so magnified? If he was not God, why are his sufferings considered as so precious? Why should his cross be counted "a stumbling block to the Jews, and to the "Greeks foolishness*?" It was no novelty to the one or to the other to hear of innocence oppressed, or good men suffering under an unjust judgment. But what shocked them was the

* 1 Cor. i. 23.

idea that this should happen to a divine being. This it was which they treated, and their followers in these days treat as an absurdity and impiety; even that he by whom the world was made should "come to his own," and not only not be received by them, but suffer an ignominious death at their hands. This is the doctrine which yet is so clearly laid down in the Scriptures, that no man reading them, as he would any other book, can fail to see it there recorded: nor is it met by our adversaries in any other way than by opposing human opinions and judgments against the express word of God.

Clear indeed, and direct as are many of the texts which speak of our Lord as God, which give him all the attributes of the Deity, it seems to me that the most conclusive, as well as the most satisfactory mode of establishing this great truth, is to take the whole scope and tenor of Scripture, as directed to this one point, the satisfaction which he made for our sins. No such satisfaction it is allowed on all hands, could be made by any creature. This being then granted, and the consequence following, as it inevitably must, that every text which proves that our Saviour made a proper atonement for the sins of the world, also proves him to be God; let the most illiterate, or the most learned man, take up the writings of the apostles and evangelists, and read straight forward, and without prejudice,

and I will venture to say that he cannot avoid seeing the doctrine in question set forth in characters the most plain and intelligible. If he will besides go on and look into ecclesiastical history, he will also find that it has been the doctrine of the great body of believers, from the first preaching of the gospel down to the present day. Nor is this constant prevalence of the doctrine a small argument in its favour. For can we conceive that God, who has promised to be with his church to the end, would suffer her to go on uniformly, day after day, and year after year, under a delusion thus professed and preached by men of an undoubted holy life, by confessors and martyrs? Nor is that true which has sometimes been urged, that the corruptions of popery have met with the same long and uninterrupted reception. Most of them, as I have shewn, are of a comparatively very late date; and of none of them can it be said that they have for any long time been universally, and without question received. On this ground, therefore, and as decisive of the question, we might surely ask, with what church, or description of Christians, is to be found "Jesus "Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and "for ever?"

Let me press the contrast further in one other instance. Between the great body of the Protestant churches (all of them, be it remembered,

holding the doctrine of the Trinity) there was, at the time of the reformation, a most perfect consent as to the grounds upon which they separated from the church of Rome. In this respect they all bore testimony for one another. The same consent upon the same points has continued and continues to exist at this day. Take Lutherans, Calvinists, or Church of England men, all have precisely the same opinion (I speak this of those who have any opinion at all) of the abominations of the church of Rome as was entertained from the beginning by our ancestors. But now is this the case with those who have since separated from their national churches; more especially the separatists from our church, whether in points of doctrine or of discipline? Have they not shifted their ground, and that repeatedly? It is most notorious that they have. And with respect to the divinity of our Saviour in particular, there is, as I have already shewn, the most astonishing variableness prevailing among those who dissent upon that ground. Nothing is more notorious than what I have said of the changes of opinion as well as actual variations in practice which have happened and are daily taking place among them.

But this is not all. The Unitarians of this age have in order to support their error, had recourse to an expedient of so dangerous a nature, so ap-

proaching to sacrilege, that it cannot be too strongly reprobated. It deserves the more to be noticed as it discovers so plainly the weakness of their cause. It fully admits what I have above stated that the Scriptures but too plainly pronounce their condemnation. In consequence some of their late writers, being pressed with texts which speak so decidedly against them, have boldly pronounced all those which contain any thing contrary to their ideas to be spurious, and no part of the genuine word of God. One of these great champions confined his attack to the beginning of St. Matthew's and of St. Luke's gospel[15]; but another of them, whose labours in the cause have very lately been brought forward again to our notice[16], has laid violent hands not only upon the same part of St. Luke's gospel, but upon the whole of the other three gospels, together with by much the greater portion of the epistles. Much the same liberties have at times been taken with the Old Testament, and not long ago one of their critics, after reviewing an attempt of this sort, congratulated the Christian world upon the satisfactory result which he drew, that after giving up what was according to him not without reason

[15] Dr. Priestley, for which see his History of Early Opinions concerning Christ.

[16] Evanson, of whose sermons an edition, with his life, has lately been published.

impeached, we should yet retain all that was good of the books of Moses and some other more important parts of holy writ[17].

This, as you may recollect, is a mode of proceeding which is not new. It was used by the heretics of the first ages; but with so little of real or permanent success, as, one would have thought, would sufficiently have discouraged a repetition of the attempt; especially at this time when the canon of the Scriptures has been so long and so clearly ascer-

[17] The Monthly Reviewer; who, at the end of review of his Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament, by which the authority of almost every book which it contains is more or less shaken, tells us that, "After all this severe criticism, it may seem consolatory "to observe that it would at most be justifiable to expel from the "present canon only Esther, Jonah, and the legend concerning "Daniel. The other works retain their claim unimpeached, "There is nothing in the point of view which has here been taken "of the Hebrew writings that ought at all to alarm the jealousy of "the most faithful Christian." This same point of view only allows the pentateuch to be a work of Moses in the main but occasionally interpolated. The same of Joshua. As to Samuel and the historical books they are all declared to be written after the captivity. As to other books; of that which is ascribed to Isaiah, the greater part is declared not to be written by him, but, as the reviewer seems to think, by Daniel. The book of Daniel (a book cited by our Saviour himself, and which more than any other it has puzzled Jews and Infidels of all sorts to answer) is condemned as "the legend concerning Daniel!" And in all this "there is no-"thing to alarm the jealousy of a faithful Christian!" Especially when we consider what might be accomplished by a more adventurous hand, if this attempt of Eichborn should be received by the Christian world with the same complacency with which it is hailed by this reviewer. See Monthly Review, Vol. xxiii. N. S. p. 497.

tained. It might have been expected that men would not easily have been brought to follow the steps of the Ebionites and Cerinthians, of Marcion and of Manes.

Such being the opinions actually entertained and the practices resorted to by this first class of sectaries, it must I think be evident to you as to me, that, as long as they continue so to act and to think, their differences from us, as they are fundamental, must continue irreconcileable, and keep them separated from our communion. So far from requiring them to join with us under these circumstances, we must rather wonder if there should be found among us, any individuals, who holding such opinions venture not only to join in our prayers but to administer our sacraments. As to the separation from us of those who are really conscientious in what we must call their blindness, it is an evil undoubtedly, but one which must be submitted to, until it shall please God, by opening their eyes, to bring them back into his church and number them with the true Israelites. While they continue to look upon us in the light of idolaters, and we charge them with being rebels to their God, with denying the Lord who bought them, how is it possible that we can agree in the essentials of worship, that we can pray with the same spirit? Without gross prevarication on the one side or on the other, there

can be, it is clear, no sort of unity in our devotions.

The same observation will, I fear, hold good with respect to most of those whose tenets I have mentioned as being involved in obscurity either involuntary or studied. Of the Quakers indeed even the peculiarities of their discipline and of their exterior deportment are so founded in the affectation of singularity and so confirmed by the most inveterate pride and obstinacy[18], their pretensions to immediate inspiration are so derogatory to the authority of the holy Scriptures, and so open the door to every wild and fantastic opinion, that it is hardly possible to reason, much less to come to any agreement with them. The wildness and want of certainty which is intimately combined with their mysticism, does indeed constantly expose them to the danger of falling into great inconveniences.

[18] Let those who would condemn these expressions as too strong look into the early history and publications of the Quakers, before they assumed the specious clothing with which their doctrines were veiled by Barclay and Penn. Nay, let them consult their late panegyrist Clarkson, who every where talks of them as a "highly professing "body:" who in truth shews them to be what Tom Paine, meaning to recommend them in his Age of Reason, said they were, "little "more than Deists." One of Clarkson's expressions is so truly bombast that I cannot help citing it as a specimen. "Hence titles, "in the glare of which some people lose the dignity of their vision, "have no magical effect upon Quakers." Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. iii. p. 209. He is very fond of this idea of Quakers keeping up the dignity of man, &c.

This has appeared very evidently in some late proceedings of the sect. Some of their members having shewn too decided a propensity to what are called the Unitarian tenets, and having followed Dr. Priestley and the Monthly Reviewers in their rejection of parts of Scripture, have been put to silence by their general assembly, even without being allowed to be heard in their defence. The society has in consequence been complained of, and not without reason, as acting contrary to its own principles[19]. Indeed the whole transaction has very plainly exposed the slippery foundation upon which they stand, and makes it probable that that is, or will soon become true which is stated by a late panegyrist of theirs as matter of lamentation, that they are a decreasing sect[20]. To us it can only be matter of satisfaction that there should be such a probability of their being in due time reclaimed from their errors.

I have thus pointed out to your notice that description of dissenters whose differences from

[19] See a Narrative of the Proceedings in America of the Society called Quakers in the case of Hannah Barnard, &c. Printed for Johnson, 1804. There have, I think, been other cases of the same sort which excited the attention of the Monthly Reviewer at the time.

[20] Clarkson in his Portraiture before cited. As he appears to have written under the patronage of the Quakers, and on their behalf, his authority must be taken to be of no small weight upon this point.

us are so essential and fundamental as to leave no prospect of union without a thorough change in their ideas of our common religion. They thus, as I have before observed, stand to us in somewhat the same relation as that in which we stand to the Romanists. The question in both cases is a direct one; namely, on which side the truth lies. It admits of no compromise. As to our doctrine, which is and has been through all ages the general doctrine of the church, it has been so ably defended and supported; more especially in this country, and even among my predecessors in this lecture, there have been found so many pious and learned men prepared and able to put to silence the gainsayers; that perhaps even what little I have said upon the subject might have been spared. I have indeed only treated it incidentally, as having caused and causing one of the main divisions in the church, though of that kind which is distinguishable, and which I was therefore called upon to distinguish from pure schism.

If I have enlarged upon it somewhat more than was strictly necessary, let me be excused by the high importance which every true believer must attach to this above all other points of doctrine. And when I add that a right understanding of the cross of Christ must always be most useful even in promoting that union

which it is the object of these discourses to enforce, I may well be justified by the example and the words of that true and divinely inspired servant of God, who when combating the propensity to schism which he had observed among the Corinthians, declared and laid down as his main principle, that "when he came to them "he was determined to know nothing among "them save Christ Jesus and him crucified*."

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

SERMON VIII.

JAMES iii. 1.

My Brethren, be not many Masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater Condemnation.

THERE has been a difference of opinion respecting the true sense of this text. To some it has appeared that St. James intended no more than to enforce the strong admonition of our Saviour against the too hasty or rash censuring of our neighbours, to bid us "not to judge lest we "should be judged." The other and, I apprehend, clearly the sounder interpretation, supposes the apostle to express a disapprobation of those men, who, from a too great love of distinction or some other bad motive, set them-

our days, I proceeded to consider the nature of the religious divisions which at this moment prevail in the country; and I distinguished the separatists from our establishment into two classes; the one differing from us upon fundamental points of doctrine; the other having no such objection to our communion. Of the former I then spoke somewhat at large: and it now remains for me to inquire into the state of those other brethren of ours, whose estrangement from us I consider as being, even upon their own shewing, unsupported by any sufficient cause: and who therefore are more directly implicated in the guilt, whatever it be, of keeping up schisms in the church.

The course which I should naturally take would be to lay before you the different descriptions, by which the individuals of this class of sectaries are distinguished, with their particular tenets and the grounds upon which they attempt to justify their separation from, and hostility to, the establishment. But to any man who will undertake to do this, difficulties almost insurmountable will present themselves. For the truth is, as I have already observed, that the same variety, the same changeableness, nay, the same inconsistency will be found in this class of dissenters as in those which in my last discourse I noticed. The nonconformists in this kingdom (for this name, I apprehend, be-

longs principally to those who differ not from us in doctrine, but object only to conformity on account of our discipline.) The Nonconformists of this time, I say, have so little of settled opinion, with respect to the causes of their dissent from us, they have indeed now so long taken it for an established truth, that their separation from us stands in no need of any apology, that we must not wonder if we find that the principle, or rather want of principle, upon which they justify their refusal to be connected with us, should keep them unconnected with each other.

To this state of things we may attribute the prevalence of that general appellation of dissenters, which is studiously affected by all sects. They reap from it two advantages: first, it is a common bond of union (and the only one equally comprehensive which could be devised, since it even takes in that other class of the Unitarians), in their opposition to the national church. It also supersedes the necessity of their ascertaining, nay, of their inquiring into the particular cause why they refuse to join in communion with us; or rather why they will not submit to the rule in ecclesiastical matters, which is established by law.

True it is, we sometimes hear of new and old Dissenters, now and then of Presbyterians, and very often indeed of Methodists. But it would

be very difficult to apply with a distinctness, or certainty, sufficiently appropriate, even these denominations to the particular congregations. The real fact is, that in this, our day, with very few exceptions, all the distinctions upon which separation was wont to be justified, are done away.

Of course, when the substance of things is gone, the names can no longer be retained to any good purpose. The words "Presbyterian" and "Independent" are therefore scarcely ever now heard of as applicable to a congregation. The one would imply a form of discipline which does not exist; and the other, as denoting a denial of that, or any other such form, is no longer necessary to be used.

Indeed where there is so little certainty or permanency in the ground upon which any body of men meet together, it is rather to be expected that they would be cautious in assuming any distinguishing title. We find accordingly that those names which are, or have been appropriated to any sect of dissenters in these, or in former days, have not, for the most part, originated with themselves, but have been fixed upon them by other persons, who were struck with some singularity in their demeanor or practice.

But whatever may be the case as to the name, it must be agreed that in fact, and in substance,

the number of the Presbyterians, properly so called, nay, of the old Independents, is dwindling away, and that they both bid fair to be swallowed up in that more powerful and popular description of enthusiasts which go about under the name of Methodists; and who, without publicly professing that great latitude of principle in religious matters, upon which the advocates for the dissenters at large now rest the cause, do, in effect, avail themselves of it in the most extraordinary degree.

There is indeed something very surprising in the growth and prevalence of this sect. When and how they first appeared I had occasion to mention in the beginning of these discourses; and you may recollect that hostility to the church, or at least dissent from her articles, even those which relate to discipline, did not originally form any part of their profession. Indeed some of the individuals of their body were decidedly adverse to the petition against subscription, which was presented to Parliament in 1772. They have therefore, by some of the advocates of the lax system, been said not to be properly entitled to the name of dissenters[a].

[a] "What the mildness of these new dissenters is I cannot guess, "nor what new dissenters he means, unless he has the Methodists "in his eye; if so, what right has he to call them dissenters? "They pretend, at least, and in my opinion have pretty well nigh "made good their pretence, that they are equally orthodox, and

They did originally, and do to this day found their claim to notice upon the presumed necessity of a more active ministry of the word. Their teachers profess to supply the zeal and the exertion which they state to be wanting in the regularly ordained clergy. They declare themselves to be called in an especial manner to take care of those flocks which are perishing, merely because they are not provided with pastors sufficiently vigilant and able. And although in some of their assemblies, more especially in that which follows the late John Wesley, some ordination, and some previous instruction is usually, if not always required, yet the principle being once declared, and precedents established of men taking upon themselves the pastoral office, in consequence of an alleged inward call, only known to themselves, and not subject to any examination or sanction from others, the consequence has been, that the country has been inundated with an incalculable number of illiterate and uninformed teachers of the word; that men who had no means nor opportunity of studying the Scriptures, or getting at a right knowledge and understanding of their contents, have taken upon themselves to inform and in-

" equally sincere Conformists, as they who accuse them of hete-
" rodoxy and irregularity." Occasional Remarks upon some late Strictures on the Confessional, part ii. See Blackburne's Works, vol. vi. p. 271, n. See also vol. vii. pp. 77 and 88.

struct others; that is, to give those just and enlarged notions of religion which themselves could not have acquired.

The mischief which arises from all this may be conceived, if we advert only to a few of its consequences. Taken from the lowest of the people, these men of course confine their preaching to individuals of the same description; that is, to the lowest and most ignorant classes; to those who are most likely to be led away by unsound doctrine; among whom there is no chance that falsehood should meet with detection, or error with reproof. The evil therefore makes its way precisely where it is least likely to meet with opposition; and the very coarseness and vulgarity of phrase which is used by these men, is often of itself a recommendation, as it is a mark of their adapting themselves, as far as they are intelligible at all, to the capacities and habits of their hearers.

This ignorance in the teachers, and in the taught, this mischief of "the blind leading the "blind," becomes more serious, when it is recollected what are the subjects usually agitated in these assemblies, by and before such men. The great doctrines by which Whitfield and his followers chose to be distinguished, are, as it is but too well known, the Calvinistic tenets of absolute decrees, of unconditional election and reprobation. To these is joined that other tenet,

maintained alike by them and the other class of Methodists, that every man who is thus elected to grace has an inward and sensible assurance of his salvation: that, on the other hand, they who do not enjoy this sort of experience, as they call it, however innocent their life, or whatever their endeavours after righteousness may be, must be taken to be among the number of the reprobate, to be still "dead in trespasses and "sins*."

The evil tendency of these doctrines, more especially when operating upon those who are weak and uninformed, not only is evident, but has in fact been manifested in many individual instances, as well as in their general effect upon the sect. It is plain how directly they lead to a presumption, or to a despondency alike unchristian; how they tend to weaken, instead of strengthening the bonds of charity. The "hor-"rible decree," as Calvin himself calls it, operates most forcibly and fatally to seal up the bowels of compassion, even against those who are nearest in blood. This indeed cannot be matter of wonder, since we know that it has often armed a man against himself in the agonies of that despair, which was grounded in the apprehension that as to him the mercy of God could only work to the aggravating of his condemnation.

* Ephes. ii. 1.

On the other hand, the security of those whom a more sanguine temperament, and a natural disposition to cheerfulness, has filled with the contrary persuasion, has not only been productive of pride and arrogance, but led by a consequence too natural, to great relaxation both in morals and in practice.

That indeed, in many of the meetings belonging to this sect, the most direct antinomianism is preached, I believe, will hardly be denied. Nay, I do not doubt that if a man were to take the pains to collect, and set down the tenets, or rather the random and hazarded opinions delivered by these teachers, he would find a variety as great, and of nearly the same sort, as is recorded in the Gangræna. The manners of the times indeed, with the better understanding of Scripture, and the more wide diffusion of the spirit of charity which prevail, greatly owing, by the by, to the exertions of that national church which is so vilified, may operate in some degree to restrain the extravagance of their flights: but still the catalogue would be found but too numerous and disgusting.

If I have not ranked errors so dangerous and gross among the fundamental points, which may in some sort excuse or justify separation, it is, first, because the persons who teach them profess, however falsely, to teach nothing but what is contained in the articles of our church. Se-

condly, because the error consists not so much in preaching doctrines radically false and unfounded, as in the exaggeration with which the true doctrine is urged, in the extreme to which it is pushed, and the manner in which it is distorted. It is not indeed to be denied that there have been divines of our church, not however, as has been supposed, the immediate authors of our reformation, who maintained the doctrine of absolute decrees, and perhaps as strongly as Calvin himself did. It is also most certain that such were the opinions of the old Puritans; and if the late Presbyterians and Independents have been somewhat moderate upon these topics, they owe it very much to their intercourse with the divines of the establishment. But those of our church, and even the sounder Puritans, who held this doctrine most positively in former days, were careful to keep in the shade all that was dangerous or derogatory to the moral precepts of the gospel, and to guard against every mistake in practice to which it might give occasion[a]. In stating therefore their ideas of abso-

[a] A remarkable instance of this we have in Whitgift, who is on all hands allowed to have been a most decided Calvinist. He found fault with the university of Cambridge for their proceedings against Barret, one of their preachers, and for a retractation which they had made him sign; "for that," among other reasons, "in some parts "of his retractation they had made him affirm that which was con "trary to the doctrine holden and expressed by many sound and "learned divines in the church of England, and in other churches

lute election and reprobation, they failed not to caution their hearers against applying the doctrines to themselves, or to any other individual; and while they declared the outward works of a man to be the only proof of his inward justification, they reprobated in the strongest terms the abominations of antinomianism; while they held that the elect could not finally fall from grace, they maintained also that it was only by his actual perseverance in righteousness that a man could know that he was one of the number. Their preaching was perhaps not very consistent with their doctrine, but it kept clear of evil. The contrary, however, has been most directly, and lamentably the case, since the wider propagation of schism has cast the handling of these most delicate and dangerous points upon men, who are as conspicuous for their rashness and violence, as for their want of education, and of all acquired knowledge. In their hands these terrible weapons are wielded without judgment, and without discretion, and upon all occasions, simply because they are

" likewise, men of best account: and that which, for his own " part, he thought to be false, and contrary to the Scriptures. For " the Scriptures were plain, that God, by his absolute will, did not " hate and reject any man without an eye to his sin. There might " be impiety in believing the one; there could be none in believing " the other. Neither was it contrary to any article of the church " of England, but rather agreeable thereunto." Strype's Life of Whitgift, p. 441. And he shews great anxiety to keep them quiet upon such points.

found to be of the greatest power in exciting the imagination and interesting the feelings of the weaker brethren. They are made therefore to supply the place of argument and of eloquence; to supersede every other, however necessary or wholesome doctrine. Making the whole mystery of salvation to consist in a man's opinion of himself, these deceivers do in fact "change the truth of God into a lie*," they give to the proud and the scornful what is promised only to the humble and the meek.

That however this style of preaching should be more and more practised every day, that it should gain such ground is not surprising. It warmly interests, while it deeply alarms those who are unable to detect its fallacy. It holds out the stake of a professed gamester, often desperate and always anxious, but great in its object. On the other hand, to the preacher it is a most useful engine; a short and compendious way of doing the work. For we know that it requires both knowledge and temper and patience to reason soberly "of righteousness, "temperance and judgment to come†," but it requires no pains nor study to qualify a man for harping always upon the same string; for bellowing out to affrighted multitudes that unless they feel quite sure that they shall be

* Romans i. 25. † Acts xxiv. 25.

saved, they will inevitably be damned. Instead of bidding men to "do justice and to love "mercy, and to walk humbly before their "God*," and shewing them the way in which these and the like commandments must be fulfilled, how much more easy must it be to say and to repeat only, Be confident and have faith, and your salvation is sure. Such are the leading traits of that doctrine, in which the whole of Christianity is made to consist; and in the delivering of which many impieties and blasphemies are put forth, which almost exceed, as indeed they have been compared to those of the Papists[4].

All this is accompanied with the most gross and indiscriminate calumnies against the regular clergy, who are treated as "dumb dogs," as watchmen who sleep upon their posts; as men who are totally unmindful of the solemn duty which they have bound themselves to discharge. While these adversaries of ours thus declaim to their hearers upon our neglect, they fail not to magnify their own diligence; their labours are contrasted with ours in the most invidious way,

* Micah vi. 8.

[4] Particularly by bishop Lavington in his "Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared," where the reader may see a strong resemblance with great clearness made out.

and in such a manner as to throw the advantage all on their side[a].

[a] Of this I can adduce a very strong instance in which the attack is made personally upon me. The reader must first be informed that a magazine set on foot by John Wesley under the title of the Arminian Magazine is now continued by his followers under the title of the Methodist Magazine: and that the publication of it is as regularly provided for at the annual conference of that sect, as any other of their most important objects. In this magazine there is a particular department inscribed by them, "The truth of God defended," in which publications inimical to their connexion are reviewed. To this ordeal, such as it is, was subjected (in January and February 1807) a sermon which I preached before the archdeacon of Bucks in the spring preceding; and in which I had touched shortly upon the points which are the subject of the present discourses. For this good deed the heads of the sect have raved against me most furiously in every possible way. They have attacked the style as well as the matter of the sermon; and represented me as equally ignorant of facts and unsound in doctrine. Their objection to me as a bad writer seems to consist in this, that I have called the publication of a sermon *a thing*; that I have said that to have added notes to a sermon would "in some degree have altered the nature of the "thing;" and that I have construed the word "church" with the neuter pronoun "it" and not with the feminine "she." I had said that we should "particularly direct our attention to the situa- "tion of the church: as well to the attacks with which it is or "may be threatened as to the means by which they may be re- "pelled," &c. And these gentlemen, meaning to be witty, refer the pronoun "it" to "situation" instead of to "church," in order to make me talk nonsense. They go on to throw out all manner of insinuations against me and the rest of the clergy, charitably recommending to us Mr. Simeon's "Helps to Composition," and thus proving most decidedly what they pretend to deny, their hostility to the establishment, as well as the peculiarity of their preaching. They next are very angry with me as charging them with what I never meant to extend to the followers of Wesley,

That any encouragement should be given to such a sort of preaching, that language any way

namely the doctrines of absolute decrees. I was writing in Buckinghamshire, where those doctrines almost exclusively prevail with the church, as well as other, Methodists. They then justify the doctrine of sudden, that is, instantaneous, conversions, from the versicle and response of our church, "O God make speed to save "us," "O Lord make haste to help us!" and in this as in other parts indulge very freely in such jokes as "gentle dulness ever "loves." Lastly they proceed to the most gross misrepresentation. "In conclusion," say they, "Mr. Le Mesurier reverts to the "false but favourite doctrine of *merit*," (these Italics are theirs) "and says that '*if there be* those to whom the Lord has vouchsafed "an assurance of salvation it can be only to such as have *merited* "that happiness by a long and uniform course of piety and virtue." "Here we would observe," they go on, "that the Methodists "have believed and preached, with every true church of England "man, that 'we are accounted righteous before God only for the "*merit* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith and not by "our own works or deserving," &c. Thus in fact accusing me most pointedly of holding false doctrines respecting merits. Now the candid reader would immediately see that the word "merited," is not used by me in the strict theological, but in the ordinary and popular sense. I was not talking at all of the doctrine of merit strictly speaking. And this Dr. Coke, or whoever wrote this article, must have known. He could not neither be ignorant of my real opinions. For in the beginning of the very same paragraph from which he quotes, I had thus stated them, "Let us," I say, addressing myself to my brethren the regular clergy, "not be spar-"ing in setting forth the great truths of our religion, and in par-"ticular, shewing an entire and sole dependence on the one sacri-"fice of Christ. Let us be as explicit as possible in disclaiming "all merit of our own," &c. Now could it have been believed, if it were not thus shewn, that any man could be so lost to all sense of decency as well as justice, as after this to charge me with contradicting the doctrine of our articles? Is there any sort of means which will be neglected, any sort of scandal which will not be

similar to that which is used by those intruders should be adopted by any member of the establishment, I must lament, because it appears to me that any approximation or countenance given to such doctrine can never promote the ends of true religion. I must lament it too for the reason which I have formerly mentioned that it has greatly conduced to the increase of schism without the church; if it has not also created a schism of its own within the pale: for surely to adopt any distinctive appellation, such as that of gospel or evangelical ministers, in opposition to others who are thus by implication arraigned as deficient in the necessary requisites of their office, cannot but tend to disturb the harmony which should subsist among all the individuals of the same communion. We have however by the explanations to which the assumption of this title has given rise, and in the course of which the real and genuine doctrine of the church has been fully vindicated and asserted, obtained this advantage for ourselves the more moderate and cool dispensers of the word, that we may now quietly be allowed to enjoy our claim to at least an

employed against the clergy, by those who can be guilty of such bare-faced falsehood; and that in the very moment when they are arrogantly and presumptuously giving themselves out as "defend-" ing the truth of God?"

equal participation in the character of true churchmen[6].

If I have spoken freely and without reserve upon this head, it is because I am strongly impressed with the importance which should be attached to this point; it is because here in my judgment the strong hold of schism is to be found. I will add, that there is no man of a sober mind who will not acknowledge that much detriment has accrued to religion by the manner in which the topics to which I allude have been handled in the pulpit whether of the church or of the meeting house. We know particularly as to the latter, that the absurd and ridiculous, as well as unscriptural language, in which what may be called the amusement rather than the instruction of the day is dealt out, has been pushed to that degree of extravagance as to supply topics for all manner of ludicrous composition, and even for the stage. On the other hand the assertion of Mr. Toplady and his fellows, that their tenet of absolute decrees was the doctrine of the church, has also furnished the Unitarians with some of their most plausible arguments against the sup-

[6] I need hardly mention the several answers which have been given to Mr. Overton's book by Mr. Daubeny, Mr. Pearson, and others: as also Dr. Laurence's Bampton Lectures before referred to. There have been also some able articles in the British Critic and other Reviews upon the subject.

posed irrationality and absurdity which they impute to the orthodox faith.

Such have been some of the consequences of that unbounded liberty, which in pursuance of the modern and, as they are called, more enlarged ideas of toleration, has been of late exercised in admitting every man indiscriminately, whatever may be his qualification or way of life, to deliver his notions of the gospel, and to set up for a "master" or "teacher in Israel." It has bred a sort of fanaticism which has in fact been to the full as destructive to the old sects of dissenters, as it can have been prejudicial to the church herself. And perhaps to this more than to any other cause may be ascribed the apparent decay, if not in numbers, yet in learning and respectability, among the dissenters; more especially that class of dissenters to whom the name originally and more properly belonged. To many of their predecessors from the days of Cartwright down to those of Doddridge; nay, to some few in our time, the general cause of Christianity, and even of orthodoxy in doctrine has been greatly indebted: but (I say it with no invidious meaning) it does appear to me that we have no great promise of that sort at this moment. On the contrary those who have distinguished themselves in the literary world in these days have been almost without exception of the Unitarian description: that is of the

number of those who making the grounds of their dissent to rest upon the deductions of human reasoning are naturally compelled in some sort to acquire those stores of human learning, and to exercise those talents by which alone that ground can be maintained. But the other class of dissenters holding the doctrines not only of the Trinity, but of the exclusive efficacy of faith, and some of them the extremes of election and reprobation, for which they must look only to the text of scripture; professing besides in their prayers and in their preaching always to expect the extraordinary aid of the spirit, have at all times, on the latter account most especially, been but too liable to the inroads of enthusiasm: they have also, as another consequence of this last principle, been less careful to keep up those helps of human knowledge, which we of the establishment hold it not only advantageous but a part of our duty to be sedulous in cultivating. The effect of this has been that the preaching of the methodists being more full of noise and requiring less of understanding or reflection to comprehend it, has with the greater ease found access into the congregations of their dissenting brethren; that many of the individuals have been seduced from their soberer and better informed pastors; and that, in the conflict, those who were in a higher degree enthusiastic have gained the ascendency, and even

obtained possession of those meeting houses in which formerly none but ministers in due form ordained by the presbytery were allowed to officiate.

Thus it has happened, that as I mentioned before, all the old sects of orthodox dissenters seem ready to be swallowed up and lost in this more novel and active body of separatists; and the idea prevalent among them that ignorance and want of literature are of no consequence in a preacher, and cannot impede the grace of God by which they declare that they are sensibly impelled, bids fair finally to debase not only their doctrine, but the character of their ministry[7].

[7] It surely is a singular circumstance that no sort of qualification should be required of those who are licensed to preach the word; that even men who are so ignorant as not to be able to write their names, should be sent forth with full authority and without molestation to vent what doctrine they please. Nay, that temporal advantages (as exemption from certain offices and from serving in the militia) evidently operating as an encouragement for such presumption should have been annexed to the mere obtaining of such licences; and this even when the man is six days out of the seven following a handicraft trade or working as a common labourer. I must think that if the 19 G. 3. c. 44, was now to be passed, such extreme latitude would not be given. In the army of reserve act, and in later militia acts the exemption is extended only to those who follow no other occupation than those of teacher or schoolmaster. Perhaps a similar restriction upon granting a licence to preach might not be improper. I am well aware that what I have said above of the ignorance of the Methodist preachers in general, will expose me again to be taken to task by Dr. Coke and Mr. Joseph

Under such circumstances I do not feel myself called upon to mention any of the other classes of dissenters, or to enter with more particularity into the situation and merits of our opponents, as they are at present marshalled in array against our establishment. If you recollect the positions which I set out with offering for your consideration, you will, I apprehend, agree that to go into any further detail would be beside my purpose; and that what I have said will sufficiently affect every description of sectaries, so as to bring them within the scope of my argument[s].

Benson, or whoever may be the editors of the Methodist Magazine for the year. But the fact is so notorious that I fear not to leave the matter without further comment on my part to the judgment of my readers. I am aware indeed that of late in the Methodist Magazine learning seems to have grown into some sort of favour; but this in my opinion only proves that the sect is flourishing, and that considering themselves as well established they would not now neglect the aid of human endowments. That probably too they find that power is not always to be preserved by the same sort of means which have served for its acquisition.

[s] Amongst other changes to which such things are subject I find that the disciples of Wesley have lately arrogated to themselves exclusively the title of Methodists. The followers of Whitfield are distinguished I believe, by the title of the evangelical connexion or some such description. When or how this was arranged I know not: but it must surely be allowed to those who are not of the number of the initiated to call both the sects by that name which was first assumed by or affixed to them at their first rising into notice equally and in common. I speak this with a reference to those angry strictures made upon my visitation sermon by the Wesleyans

You will remember that the great points which I have laboured to inculcate, have been,

in the Methodist Magazine, before mentioned, where I am taken to task in rather a curious manner, for having considered the Methodists as holding the doctrine of absolute decrees. In what I said, I was, as I have observed before, alluding to the Whitfield connexion, which, as every body knows, thanks to the celebrity of Cowper the poet, is very prevalent in the country where I was preaching. I rather suspect indeed from a sort of admission to that effect in the Christian Observer for October 1807, p. 676, that the Wesleyan connexion is getting the better of its rival in the cause of fanaticism; which must be in a great measure attributed to the superior foresight of John Wesley, in establishing such a regular form of government over his flock; as well as his good sense in not adopting all the extravagances of his brother sectary. I cannot say however that their differences are so great as one might suppose. For example in the Evangelical Magazine (for January 1807, p. 29) we are told of the extraordinary conversion of an Atheist, and this is brought about by referring him to the gospel and telling him that he will find there that Christ "hath power *unconditionally* to forgive all "manner of sins and blasphemies," which if the reader will find in his gospel his copy must have a different reading from any that I have met with. Indeed the "interpreter of a thousand," (as he is called) who said this, immediately contradicts himself; for he goes on, "Believe then on him and thou shalt not perish," which if it be not a direct condition, namely that of believing, I know not what words mean. The sick man however the next morning repeats this as a sign of his conversion, "Yes, the son of man hath "power to forgive all manner of sins unconditionally." On the other hand in the Methodist Magazine for 1804, p. 607, we have the account of a disciple of Thomas Paine: the nature of whose conversion is stated to be among other things, that "while he "condemned himself for his past criminal inattention to the means "of grace, he did not protest, as some persons have been known "to do when distressed with the fear of death, that if God would "prolong his life, he would be assiduous in the use of them for "the future, as though he would thereby make a full, or at least a

that schism is a sin; and that the sin consists in separating without cause from the church to

" partial atonement for his former folly: no, he evidently saw that " nothing could remove the least of his sins but the gratuitous cle- " mency of the Lord God," &c. I would here ask how a man's making resolutions that he would use the means of grace for the future, in any way derogates from the gratuitous clemency of God; for as to the introducing the word " atonement," this man must know that no sinner making such resolutions, nor clergyman directing him so to do, ever considers or calls such amendment of life an atonement for the past: and that if ever any such word has been used, which I do not believe, it can only have been in a popular and loose sense: just as in the sermon before mentioned I used the word "merited," upon which those gentlemen have so harped; or as the apostle used the word " unrighteous," when he said to the brethren, " God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour " of love," which taking the word strictly would imply that God is absolutely bound in justice to reward the work and labour of those who serve him. But here closing this discussion which would carry us too far and divert us from the main point, I shall leave my readers to weigh the doctrine of the evangelical teacher insisting that the promises of Christ (for such must be the meaning of the word "power," as used by him) are "unconditional," against the practice of the Methodist who would discourage the making resolutions of amendment lest they should interfere with the grace of God: and to judge of himself what foundation there is in holy writ for either the one or the other; only reminding him that these are among the " fruits" of schism.

One word more, as to my "ignorance" in supposing that in Buckinghamshire the Methodists are Calvinistic. The Reviewer refers me (p. 22) to the minutes of their conferences, or to the Methodist Magazine for the September preceding, where, he says, I shall find the names of the Methodist preachers in Buckinghamshire. Now I have made the search, not indeed in the minutes for the year 1806, but in those for 1804 & 1807, and in them I find no Methodist preacher appointed in the Wesleyan connexion for Buckinghamshire. Which is a striking instance of a corrector requiring to be

which a man belongs: that is, from the rule of discipline established and observed in the place where a man is born or where he is permanently resident. That with that church so established a man is bound to abide in communion, unless he can shew clearly and satisfactorily that the conditions of communion which she requires, are such as he cannot subscribe to without serious hazard to his salvation.

It is plain now, that allowing, as I do and must do, conscience to be the guide of every man, a thousand distinctions might be taken: that, as many individuals as there are who separate from us, so many cases might by possibility be supposed: that at least every congregation might have its particular cause to allege for its separation.

My belief indeed is that very few of them are provided with any such cause; but in candour,

corrected; for I presume that no change took place between 1804 & 1807, and this proves also what I have stated, that the Methodists in Buckinghamshire hold with Whitfield and not with Wesley. That there are even now Calvinists called Methodists, the Evangelical Magazine will prove; for there I find accounts of preachers ordained to congregations of that description. See Mag. for Aug. p. 379. Nay, in the very Magazine (for Jan. 1807) in which my sermon is criticised, (p. 4) I find Mr. Adam Clarke (one of the chiefs of the sect) speaking of Whitfield as at least a reputed Methodist. "The first Methodist sermon (so called) which Mr. S. "heard was from Mr. Whitfield at St. Luke's church." Taking these words even with the qualification, they clearly justify me in applying the term to predestinarians.

or only for argument's sake, I may allow it to be the case; and, numerous as these might be, it could never be my intention to enter into them all. My object indeed was not so much to bring back those who have strayed, for I fear they are little disposed to listen to what may come from this place, as to confirm those who are actually a part of our flock.

In order to do this, it was sufficient to touch upon the great and leading arguments which have of late been most commonly urged upon the subject and adopted most widely. They will be found, as I think I have shewn, to resolve themselves, almost without exception, into that fashionable principle so much in vogue of late years, that the most unbounded liberty of thinking and of acting is not only to be allowed, but to be commended, in religious as well as in political questions. What I have answered to this I need not repeat, as I have had occasion to advert to it more than once: and perhaps considering the mischievous effects of which it has in our times been productive, we may venture to suppose that it is not now looked upon as so absolutely incontrovertible, as but a little while back it was taken to be[9].

[9] I will only add one word more respecting the origin of these principles. Archdeacon Blackburne in the Confessional after mentioning Locke as having given currency to these more enlarged ideas of what is by some called toleration, adds in a note, "It is well

But as, in its application to religious disputes, it has been a received notion with some persons, that this was the very principle upon which the first reformers proceeded; nay, that the reformation could be defended upon no other principle; I thought it necessary to inquire with some minuteness and to ascertain what were the allegations and the mode of proceeding actually pursued, more especially in this country, by those great men to whom we are indebted under God for our emancipation from the bondage of Popery. I have satisfied myself, and I hope have satisfied you, that they advanced no such claim. I have shewn too that no such claim was advanced by those who first separated from our church. These leaders in the cause of schism alleged grounds for their separation, which, however trivial and unworthy of notice they may now appear, were held out by them as being of high import and materially affecting their hopes of eternal salvation.

" and truly observed in the preface to the last beautiful edition of " Mr. Locke's Letters concerning Toleration, in quarto, 1765, " that, 'Mr. Locke was not the first writer on this subject; for " the argument was well understood and published during the civil " war," (that is, what we commonly call the great rebellion) Blackb.'s Works, Vol. v. p. 98. It is remarkable that Blackburne's ideas on the subject, nay the whole bias of his mind, seems to have been owing to his having stumbled upon these " excellent old " Puritans," as he calls them, early in life at the house of a relation. Account of his Life. Ib. Vol. i. p. 5.

It is not, therefore, (and let it no more be urged) it is not to the era of the Reformation that we must go back for the arguments by which the church is now assailed. They are all of modern date, or never heard of in old time except in the writings of the popish doctors, when labouring by every possible means to advance the ambitious views of their pontiffs, and to subvert the established authority of both civil and ecclesiastical magistrates.

That indeed the object at this present juncture is not very dissimilar; that it is not any particular points of doctrine or of discipline which are objected to, but the very existence of the church which is struck at, must be apparent from the union of all dissenters, however differing in fundamentals; from this comprehension and admission into the league of even the Roman catholics. The manner in which the points of attack are studiously generalized I have already noticed; and have observed how little of peculiarity there is now discernible in any sect. I must leave it to you to judge whether conscience or scripture can have much to do either with the plan or with the mode of carrying it into execution. As to the means which are employed, I shall only mention one circumstance more as strongly shewing how little attention is paid to consistency or to principle, when the violation of

them is attended with any prospect of advantage.

I have already observed to you that there have been individuals within the church, actually engaged in her ministry, who have fallen under the suspicion, well or ill founded, of holding opinions directly repugnant to her articles; and this upon points which we have seen to be most essential and fundamental. How far and to what extent this might be true of all or any of them, I am not called upon to inquire, or to establish; it is sufficient for my argument that it was so presumed and understood by the dissenters, who failed not to shelter themselves under their authority, while they made them the constant themes of their panegyric on that very account. They are indeed never mentioned by our adversaries but as being men particularly enlightened, liberal and learned, nay, sincere and honest. Now, it must be noted that these persons so highly and in many respects so justly extolled, remained in our communion, and joined in the administration of our sacraments, and the daily use of our prayers, when, according to the ideas of the men who so praised them, they must have conceived those prayers to be not only ill expressed, but in many cases blasphemous; and have looked upon those sacraments as unduly and with superstitious ceremonies

administered. One would have thought therefore that sincerity and honesty would have been the last themes of panegyric with which men so situated should have been graced. We should at least not have expected that when the whole body of the clergy were, as it has often happened, aspersed, as professing doctrines merely because there were temporal emoluments attached to that profession, those individuals among them should have been specially excepted from the censure, who of all others upon their own shewing, or rather upon the shewing of their partizans, were peculiarly liable to the imputation. But thus it is, or at least so it appears, and it may as well be said at once, that, in the estimation which they make of men's conduct and the praises which they bestow, the great point in the contemplation of the dissenters, is what will further their views, and what will not. Men may remain in the church if they will be content to undermine it. Nay, instances are not wanting where even infidels and scoffers have had their share of commendation, because they promoted and recommended that way of thinking which was most adverse to the established church[10].

[10] I may I believe safely refer my reader generally to the Monthly Review for examples of this. But he may also consult the Biographia Britannica, (last ed.) Article CHUBB, and the additional note to the article ANTHONY COLLINS.

But, it may be said, nay, it has been said by certain objectors within the church, it has been repeated by some who are without; it is not so much the church herself which is a grievance, as the manner in which she governs, and the yoke which she imposes upon her members; in particular the subscriptions which she requires from her pastors: she is it seems exclusive in her principle and uncharitable in her judgments.

Let us see then what would be the consequence of giving way to such objections. Let us ask what would be gained by departing from the order which is now established? By what must the present system be replaced or how modified?

Why, some persons, among the foremost of whom are the Romanists, who when they are weakest are always surprisingly liberal[11], tell us, that a portion of the ecclesiastical revenues should be appropriated to the procuring subsistence for every description of ministers, and establishments for all sorts of sectaries. They are indeed aware that in asking this from the church, they are asking her in fact to encourage what she declares to be error, to minister arms against what she is persuaded to be the truth.

[11] Very different, I will say, in this respect from that true church whose cause I am supporting. She has never compromised with her assailants, nor for the sake of temporary advantages renounced or dissembled what she considered as fundamental truths.

It is therefore asked not so much of the church as of the civil rulers, at whose disposal it is argued that her possessions are rightly placed. That indeed there is any difference between the tenure by which the estates of the church are holden, and the title by which all other property is secured, is a position which never has been made out, and I apprehend never will be; but, admitting all that they want in this respect, setting aside all considerations of justice and right as they might be pleaded in favour of the church; yet must it be allowed, that, when "kings and queens," became the "nursing fa-"thers and nursing mothers" of the church, and when there appeared to be divisions among the believers, it became the duty of the sovereigns to ascertain what assemblage of Christians it was which could properly claim to be the true church: and having once ascertained the point, to give to them and to them only protection and encouragement, and not to the multitude of pretenders to that character. As long therefore as the church of England is the church by law established, as long as she is in the judgment of the magistrate the true church, she must continue entitled to all the advantages which she possesses. She is indeed entitled to them according to the intention of those who first granted a portion of their revenues for the support of a clergy: who assigned it to a certain

and determinate body, to such a body as in its constitution and according to their ideas, was calculated to maintain the truth; and not to a disjointed and undisciplined herd of teachers, who might at pleasure vent whatever absurd or erroneous opinions their imaginations might suggest.

But the idea is not only big with injustice, and contrary to God's word, and to the reason of the thing, but impossible to be carried into execution. Let us suppose that in the first instance it was possible so to arrange the division of the spoil that all parties might for a moment be satisfied; that Papists, Socinians, Methodists, and even Quakers, if they chose it, had all their share, and to their hearts' content. The settlement once made, how long would it last? Is there any possible assurance that it would last an hour? For who shall say that in the very next point of time, some of those fanatics who are so numerous in our days, some illiterate boor or ignorant mechanic, or even day labourer, might not, by setting up an additional receptacle for schism, disturb the whole order? That he might not draw away from the others a part of their followers, and upon the very principle on which the first division proceeded, demand that the parts so allotted should again be brought together, and that out of the common mass he should receive a portion? And as every day might produce new ministers, so every day might gather together

new congregations all equally entitled with the rest to partake of this fund so thrown open to all.

Nor should we obtain any greater degree of certainty, if we were to listen to those within our church who have professed no intention of making any material alteration in her establishment, except the taking away of those subscriptions which they considered as an intolerable burthen unwarrantably laid upon their consciences. This was the language of Archdeacon Blackburne and the rest of the meeting at the Feathers tavern in the year 1772. But neither there nor in the Confessional was it particularly pointed out whether any or what test should be substituted; or how the church in the absence of any such test, was to exist without having any definite doctrine, or without some security that her doctrine, such as it might be, should be taught by her ministers. We see no trace of any object but that of throwing down fences, without considering how the thing was afterwards to subsist when thus laid open to every inroad. It was therefore not unfairly concluded that the real point in view was wholly to change the constitution of the church, and under colour of maintaining individual liberty to make her profess a new faith, and hold a new language.

Take the attempt however in the most fa-

vourable light: let us admit that nothing is intended more than is disclosed. Suppose then that no subscription was required, no inquiries made as to the opinions of those who are to officiate as ministers within our communion. What, in such a case, is to prevent any the wildest and most contradictory tenets from being delivered in opposition to each other, either from different pulpits at the same time, or from the same pulpit in succession? Will it tend to edification for the same people to be told one day that Christ was mere man and that to worship him is idolatry; and on the next to be taught that he is one with God, and in every respect to be honoured and prayed to as God? In one church to be told that we are created with sufficient power of ourselves to do the wll of God, and in another to be warned that it is only through the blood of Christ and by virtue of the atonement which he made for us, that our endeavours after salvation can be rendered in any manner available? Lastly, what confusion must it cause to have the authenticity of scripture by one man questioned and by another strenuously maintained? Who sees not, that, if such differences on religious points must exist, it is better that they who differ so widely should be kept asunder; that they only who agree in the same doctrine should worship God in the same place?

Nor would the difficulty be obviated by men's subscribing, as has been proposed, only to the Scriptures as commonly received. In the first place, in the way that men interpret Scripture, this would be almost equal to no subscription at all. And, secondly, how upon the broad principle which in such cases is to be acted upon, could you repel from communion those, who professing to be Christians, reject either whole books or particular passages of the sacred text? Would they not urge with the same force as any other sectaries, that they have a right to preach the gospel, according to what appears to them to be the word of God and that only.

Such men could never be answered by the advocates for the latitudinarian principle; they could only be met properly and with effect by those who could say what our church says, that to an erroneous conscience indulgence only and not encouragement is due; that truth only is to be attended to and followed, and not the scruples, however honestly entertained, of weak brethren; that the faith once delivered must be holden, and error combated by all means which are consistent with Christian charity; that this is the very end for which the church was established, the very duty which is imposed upon rulers.

Who indeed does not see, in the history of

modern as well as of ancient sectaries and heretics, the absolute necessity of providing against the extravagant lengths to which men may be hurried in the maintenance of their peculiar opinions? Who knows not that without a regular watch not even the strongest holds can be secure? The fact is, however, as I have already* stated, that there is no church whose terms of communion are so well calculated to embrace every denomination of sincere Christians, as those of the church of England. She in fact shuts out no man who is not by his difference in fundamental points excluded. Her articles were evidently drawn up with this enlarged view: and fitted as they are for the widest admissible comprehension, she yet, as I must remind you, requires no man to declare his assent to them, except those who are specially appointed to teach others; of the integrity of whose faith, as well as their ability to impart knowledge, she is therefore bound to be fully satisfied, before she commits to their care a trust so important.

Whatever indeed of obloquy she may incur on this account we may observe, can in no way be considered as peculiar to her. She is in this case attacked only in common with all churches that are established. And the charge originated

* Sermon III.

with those from whom we might well expect that it should come. For it was by the Unitarians, or men that were or are supposed to think with them, that this objection to all establishments was first, and is now, principally maintained: that is to say, by a class of men who have never yet been able to secure to themselves not only a national, but not even any considerable establishment in any nation: whose deviation from the faith seems to have been marked by Providence with something not very unlike what has befallen the rebellious Jews; who are in some sort strangers and outcasts in every country where they abide.

But there is another accusation, very different, and even opposite in its nature, brought against our church, which, if it were in any degree true, should indeed alarm our consciences, and awaken our most serious attention. It is directed against us, both collectively and individually. It is said that the institutions of our church are not calculated for the promotion of true piety and devotion: and that we, her ministers, are wanting in diligence and in zeal. These charges are brought against us principally, as I have before observed, by those who are considered by us as intruders into the ministry, who boast that with them are found that fervency and

edification which in us are wanting[19]. I might, therefore, in the first instance, object to them, as interested judges, as men who have an evident purpose to serve in the censures which they pronounce. I might warn them, lest upon both

[19] I cannot help stating a remarkable instance of the manner in which this is alleged, even in these days, and by men of the best repute among the schismatics, for such I take Mr. Adam Clarke to be. In the article before quoted, in n. 8, I find this account of the times when the Methodists first showed themselves: "In those "days the word of the Lord was scarce, as there was no open "vision for a considerable time, till the providence of God per-"mitted the churches to be shut against Messrs. Wesley and "Whitfield, and they were compelled to go to the highways and "hedges!" Not only the scandal against the regular clergy of those days, which this conveys, is remarkable, but still more the presumption and profaneness with which God's revelations to his prophets are likened to the reveries of these enthusiasts. Take another instance of this profaneness from the same life of Mr. Thomas Symonds, when on his death bed, being asked if he would take a little wine, he said "No more wine, till I drink it "new in the kingdom of God." No wonder, when the words of the hymns which he sung were such as these:—

"My Jesus to know, and feel his blood flow,
"'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below."

Mag. for Feb. p. 52, 53.

Take one more instance from Whitfield's own mouth. After preaching at Bristol, in the year 1739, he "signified to the con-"gregation that there was one coming after him whose shoe's "latchet he was not worthy to unloose." He then published that "the Rev. John Wesley would preach next day." Method. Mag. for Sept. 1807, p. 416. This is almost equal to any passage in the "Book of the Conformities of St. Francis," before mentioned. And when such things are now published, with approbation by the leaders of the sect, it is a proof that the character of their fanaticism is not greatly improved or mitigated.

grounds, and in whatever sense taken, they should fall under the condemnation which is threatened in my text. The charges indeed are as easily made, as they are difficult to be refuted. In the exercise of a ministry so extensive and important, that it has even, by an inspired apostle, been said of it, "Who is sufficient for "these things?" administered as it is, by fallible men, what can we suppose but that there must be defects which jealousy may discover, and prejudice will magnify? In a case where the boldest of us dares not say that he is righteous, how easy must it be to impute guilt?

Such apology, however, as is consistent with the frailty of man, such claims of merit as even weak mortals may oppose to human judgments, have often, and with the approbation of the wise and good, been made for the church of England. Nor are the imputations novel, or now, for the first time, either advanced or repelled. This is but the language of the old puritans in the time of the great rebellion. Not satisfied with condemning prelacy, as radically vicious and faulty in discipline, they turned their malice against the individuals who composed the body of the episcopal clergy. By packed and interested commissioners they instituted inquiries into the character of every beneficed minister, whom they first pronounced to be scandalous, and afterwards ejected from

his living. It may be conjectured that censures so similar are not brought forward without some intention that they should answer a similar end.

This is a subject, however, upon which I need say little. Incidentally, and in the course of my argument, I have had occasion to shew what has been the conduct of our church in situations of great difficulty and danger, during which she has, with God's help, steadily maintained her ground.

Of her form of government I have also been led to speak, if not at large, yet sufficiently to shew that it is agreeable to the practice of the highest antiquity. It is indeed, we say, of divine institution. It has been shewn so to be by many of her able and pious advocates. But even of those who will not admit that episcopacy has the absolute sanction of God, many are forced to admit that it was instituted by the apostles. We say also that it is the form of ecclesiastical government best fitted for the purposes of edification: that it admits more readily than any other the exercise of that moderation, which is on all hands allowed to be so desirable, and which is so seldom found: that it is best enabled to temper its judgments with the alternate and due application of indulgence and severity. We say farther of the church, that retaining a sufficiency of those

ornaments, and of those ceremonies which give decency and grace to religious worship, she rejects all that is excessive or superstitious: that, lastly, in the provision which is set apart for the clergy, while nothing is given to ostentation or superfluity, due attention is paid to the preservation of that dignity, which, as it is allowed to accompany all human institutions, should not be withheld from that which is divine.

The effects have, as we say also, been suitable. For in what church, or among what body of men have there existed such a number of able and pious preachers of our common religion? I fear not to ask where else are to be found so many truly valuable treatises of practical piety and religious edification? Where shall we trace so much real learning, such sobriety, and zeal, concurring together, such animated, yet chastened eloquence, combined with deep research, and sound argument, as are to be found in the discourses and compositions of the divines of our church? By whom has the progress of infidelity and of heresy, nay, and of popery, been more carefully watched, or more successfully combated? Where, lastly, shall we discover, in any number of individuals, for so long a period, so much of true Christian spirit, whether in the manner of their life and conversation, or in the government of themselves and their flocks, so much to be praised,

and so little to be blamed, as is confessedly to be seen in the succession of our bishops, from the reformation to this day?

Such being the fact, I do, and must ever protest against the calumny and abuse with which the ministry of our church, and the church herself, are so frequently and so unjustly loaded. Perfection I do not attribute to her; for God has given perfection to no mortal being, and to no institution upon earth, however proceeding originally from himself. By the very infirmity which shews itself in almost every act of every man, and of every body of men, we are forcibly and hourly reminded that we "have no conti-"nuing city" here; but that we must look for happiness, and for reward, to a state of things far different, and "to come." Yet I must say that it is a great blessing, and a great privilege, too apt to be despised, and held cheap by those who enjoy it, to be born, as we have been, under a form of discipline so conducive to piety, and of which we have such assurance that it is agreeable to the word of God.

I do not say neither, I never have pretended to say, that the church of England contains within her bosom no unworthy members; nay, no unworthy ministers of the word. He must be a much bolder man than I who will venture to say this of any community to which he belongs. This is a presumption which will rather

be found with our adversaries than with us. But this I will affirm, and it is the least that can be said, that there is in her no such corruption of doctrine, no such perversion of discipline, no such imposition of what is wrong, and suppression of what is right, as makes it any way dangerous or criminal to live in her communion. Nay, I will further assert, that in her the gospel is so preached, the sacraments are so administered, that no sincere and religious member of her establishment can be left to seek for the means of serving God, or be at a loss for the way in which he is to secure his salvation. That therefore, I repeat it, being the national church duly and legally established in this country, they who estrange themselves from her, and choose to worship God after a method of their own, do it at the peril of incurring the guilt, and subjecting themselves to the punishment, of schism. That this is a schism most particularly without cause in those who can only defend their separation upon the ground of a supposed liberty of private opinion; this being a ground which, thus broadly laid down, would allow a free course to every system, and authorize the withdrawing from every government, even from such as might be the most evidently necessary for the maintenance of rule and order, and expedient for the purposes of edification. That it is but little more excus-

able in those who will persist in standing upon ground which has repeatedly been shewn to be untenable; who will rest upon scruples, which to every reasonable man must appear ridiculous; who will still affect to see abomination in a surplice, and antichrist in the sign of the cross. That further as to those whose error consists in a false confidence of their righteousness, and of the special favour of God extended to them individually, it behoves them well to be upon their guard, lest, in building so presumptuously upon the immediate influences of divine grace, they should be found to be, in fact, tempting the spirit of God; lest in following after gifts which are now, either not at all, or most sparingly bestowed, they shall appear to have neglected the true and only proffered means of salvation. That, lastly, as to those whose differences with the church are indeed material, whose schism bears the character and stamp of heresy, it doubly behoves them to take heed, that in extenuation of the mischief which they cause, they may be able most truly to plead the sincerity and purity of their intentions: they must labour indeed to inform themselves; they must use their utmost endeavour, that no strong reason be left for supposing that that which is their error is otherwise than involuntary and unavoidable, that their persuasion do not turn out to be prejudice. It becomes them well to

fear lest either, on the one hand, by setting up in themselves, and in their works, a righteousness which belongs to no human being or work; still more by withholding from their Saviour the honour which is due to him; or, on the other hand, by dividing among many that glory which belongs only to Christ, by addressing their supplications to intercessors of their own creating, instead of wholly relying on the merits of the one Mediator, they shall be deemed to have forfeited the redemption which he purchased, to have "counted the blood of the co-"venant an unholy thing;" and thereby to have cut themselves off from the benefit of that great act of mercy, which was in the contemplation of our Creator even before the foundations of the world.

With respect to those whose dissent has the particular stamp of uncharitableness, who set up other teachers of their own, merely on the ground of alleged insufficiency in the regular ministers of the church; who accuse us of being negligent in our work, and vicious in our lives, let them be aware that, even if their accusation were true, it would form no excuse for schism. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels*." We are weak and fallible men. We are indeed responsible to our great master, and most assuredly

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

for any wilful neglect, for any despite which we may have done to the spirit of grace we shall be doubly chastised; but as long as we preach the word, as long as we put up the regular prayers for the congregation, as long as we administer the sacraments, there is no pretence for our flocks to commit themselves to other guides, to run into by paths. If we be inattentive to our duty, let us be rebuked. If we be slow in correcting ourselves, or admonishing others, let them cry aloud and spare not, let us, as we ought, bear the blame. Let application be made to those who are the regular superintendants of the church. If they are slack also, let them also be reproved. But let not this be made a pretext for adding one evil to another. If our adversaries be really desirous of reforming us, let them take the right way: they must know that it is not that which they have chosen. It was not by rending the church that our ancestors freed themselves, under God, from the corruptions of popery, but by casting out of it the abominable thing: by soberly examining into, and establishing the grievance, and then applying the remedy. But to run headlong into schism, upon the ground of imperfections, either merely pretended, or only to a certain degree existing, is to shew in the parties who thus act a desire of distinction, and an undue attachment to their private opinions, rather than an anxiety

for the real interests of the community. I say this, not rashly, because it is clear that, for those who cry out against abuses, to adopt a course which puts them in the wrong, can only serve to perpetuate abuses. It takes from the force of any remonstrance, however well founded, when it is shewn that the person who makes it is himself in an error, whether of the same, or of a different sort. If there be ministers in our church who are vicious, and desire to continue in vice, they must indeed be thankful to those who, by their conduct, give them an opportunity of saying that they are only blamed by men who are out of humour with the church, whose delight it is to "speak evil of "dignities*."

Such are the observations which I have thought it my duty to make on a subject, the importance of which has of late years been greatly overlooked; and which has by many persons, from a very obvious motive, a motive however which cannot be too strongly noticed, been studiously kept out of sight. I have shewn you, I trust, with sufficient clearness, that the sin of schism is expressly and repeatedly condemned in Scripture; that in the judgment of all antiquity, nay, of the whole Christian world, until a comparatively very late period,

* 2 Peter, ii. 10.

almost unprecedented. By national punishments we are admonished of our wickedness, whether national or individual. Nor can we expect that the effect will be removed while the cause subsists. We must have peace at home, before we can hope to be relieved from the burthen of foreign war.

Let us all then apply ourselves to the work, by beginning at the right end. Let every one examine his own heart, and be sure that all is right within, before he presumes to judge others, or to meddle with received and established order. Let us strive, if we will, for the common good; but let it be according to our Lord's directions. Let our thoughts be pure, and our intentions just and upright. Let us, above all things, search out, and hold fast the true faith. Let us, as he said to his disciples, "have salt within "ourselves," and then doubt not that "we shall "have peace with one another*."

* Matth. ix. 50.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.

(See p. 34.)

THAT the charge of Socinianism was directly made by more than one person against the (then anonymous) author of the "Plain Account of the Sacrament," will appear from the following particulars. I shall first adduce William Law, who, in his "Demonstration of the gross and fundamental "Errors of a late Book, called a Plain Account," &c. has the following, among many other equally strong passages: "The way that this author came by his Plain Account of the "Sacrament, was not, as he would have you believe, from "an impartial consideration of the words of the Institution, "but from his wrong knowledge of the Christian faith. "He had first lost and renounced all the right and true "knowledge of our Saviour in the Scriptures, and therefore "was obliged not to find it in the Sacrament. And because "it would be openly confessing to the world that he was, "in the sense of Scripture, an Antichrist, if he should have "plainly told you that he did not believe Christ to be truly

" and essentially God, or the atonement and satisfaction for " our sins, or a principle of life to us, therefore he only " tells you that he has been led into this account of the " Sacrament by a bare consideration of the words of the " Institution, according to the common rules of speaking," &c.—Demonstration, &c. 4th ed. p. 100. Before this, William Law had made the same charge in effect, though in milder terms, against the bishop, by name, in his third letter, particularly in the postscript. I shall next refer to another answer to the bishop's book, entitled, " A true Account of " the Nature, End, and Efficacy of the Sacrament," &c. by Thomas Bowyer, M. A. printed by Rivingtons', 1738, written, as it seems to me, with great ability; where, besides the opposition which is made to the bishop's doctrine in the body of the book, it is shewn, in the preface, by the production of passages in parallel columns, first, that the bishop's account of the Sacrament is exactly that which is given by the Socinians; and, secondly, that it is also completely at variance with the doctrine of the church of England, as set forth in her articles, homilies, and liturgy. A third answer was given by Skelton, which is about to be republished by Mr. Clapham: and which, if I recollect right, proceeds upon similar grounds. I will add, that in none of those productions do I see that weakness of opposition spoken of by the editor of the Biographia Britannica. As to the warmth which they shew, that will not perhaps be thought too great by those who are sincere believers in the divinity of Christ. As to myself, I cannot but agree with the judgment there passed upon the bishop's principles. It appears to me very clearly that any man who will take up the Plain Account without prejudice, will see in it the greatest care observed to keep clear of the doctrine of atonement; and that too in a case which could not be properly discussed without taking that very doctrine into consideration: that is, in fact, we see the author endeavouring most studiously to avoid confessing a doctrine to which he had most solemnly subscribed. When our faith in

Christ is spoken of, it is stated to be "a belief in him, as "sent into the world by God," (see p. 110, 1st ed.) not as suffering for our sins. Or, where those sufferings are spoken of, it is said of them merely that they were "undertaken, submitted to, and designed for the promoting of "our eternal happiness," p. 119. And the end for which Christ was thus sent into the world is stated to be merely "to enliven and strengthen by his excellent doctrine, and "by his holy example, our sincere endeavours to know and "practice God's commandments." This is the more striking, as all this suppression of the main end of Christ's coming into the world takes place precisely in a part of his work, where the bishop is professing particularly to explain the doctrine of our church. For these passages are found under his 17th proposition, where he professes to apply what he had previously laid down to our public office of the communion. He does this, as he says, "in order both to interpret "such passages (relating to this institution) as may stand in "need of interpretation; and to lead all persons concerned "to make use of it in the most proper and Christian manner." Now certainly if such was his intention, the bishop was bound to bring forward every passage in that office which related to the end for which that office was instituted, or which could serve to explain the nature of that death or passion, which it is our object in that office to commemorate, or remember (according to his favourite word), and consequently that of the person who so suffered. But this is precisely what he omits. Let the reader judge. In stating the exhortation read to the communicants, he tells us, after some account of the previous part, that the exhortation goes on to "engage the persons present *now*," a word not in the original, "to judge themselves, so as to repent them of all their "sins; to come to the Lord's table with a steadfast faith in "Christ, *now to be remembered*," another interpolation, "and to revive in their hearts the real sentiments of "perfect charity with all men, and the heartiest thankful-

" ness to God; assuring them that with this temper, and " these dispositions of mind, they will be *meet partakers*," that is, will partake worthily, " of these holy mysteries." Now let the reader compare this with the whole of what is said in the exhortation, observing the parts omitted, which are here printed in Italics, and let him judge whether this be a fair or a full representation. " Repent ye truly for your " sins past: have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ, *our* " *Saviour:* amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with " all men: so shall ye be meet partakers of these holy mys- " teries. And, *above all things*, ye must give most humble " and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the " Holy Ghost, *for the* redemption *of the world* by *the death* " *and* passion *of our Saviour Christ*, both God *and* man, *who* " *did humble himself even to the death upon the cross for us* " *miserable sinners, who lay in darkness, and the shadow of* " *death, to the end that he might make us the children of God,* " *and exalt us to everlasting life. And to the end that we should* " *alway remember the exceeding great love of our master and* " only Saviour, *Jesus Christ*, thus *dying for us, and the innu-* " *merable benefits which, by his precious blood shedding he hath* " *obtained to us; he hath instituted and ordained holy mys-* " *teries as* pledges *of his* love, *and for a continual remembrance* " *of his death*, to our great and endless comfort." I need hardly ask whether the passages thus omitted are not most material, in order to shew what is the sense of our church in this office of her's; and whether any good reason can be given for such an omission, but that which William Law and Bowyer have suggested? The other instance, however, which I shall adduce, is still stronger; for there the suppression takes place in the very prayer of consecration, every part of which cannot but be most important for the understanding of what our church intended. " The prayer," says the bishop, p. 116, " called the prayer of consecration, follows next, " and this is so framed that the whole congregation is sup- " posed to join in the *one* only petition in it, which is ma-

" nifestly framed upon the original design of this holy " institution, and very properly placed here just before the " acts of receiving the bread and wine." Very true: and according to this we should, of course, expect to have our attention particularly called to all that relates to " the ori- " ginal design of this holy institution." But this is precisely what the bishop takes care not to do. As if afraid to look the subject in the face, he takes his reader at once into the middle of the prayer. " In this," says he, " all the com- " municants are made to say 'hear us, O merciful Father, " we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we, receiv- " ing these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy " Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ's holy institution, in re- " membrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of " his most blessed body and blood.'" Here we see is a simple reference to our Saviour's holy institution. The account of that institution, as well as of the event upon which it is founded, is contained in the former part of the prayer, in which also " the whole congregation is supposed to join," and which therefore should not have been omitted, if the bishop had meant to give us the real and entire sense of our church in this office of her's.—It runs thus: " Almighty " God, who of thy tender mercy didst give *thine only be-* " *gotten Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for* " *our redemption, who* made there, *by his one oblation of him-* " *self once offered*, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, " oblation, and satisfaction, *for the sins of the whole world;* " *and did* institute, *and in his holy gospel command us to con-* " *tinue a perpetual memory of* that, *his precious death*, until " his coming again. Hear us," &c. as above. I may now ask if these are common omissions, or if they could have taken place without design. I will say further, that had the whole of this exhortation and prayer been thus set out, it would not have been easy, nay, not possible to apply this office of our church to the author's notion of the Sacrament

being a mere remembrance of Christ's death in general, when that death is here so specially set forth as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for him; nay, further, when the Sacrament itself is declared to be a "pledge of our Saviour's love, to "our great and endless comfort." Nor could the author have ventured to speak of Christ simply as "sent from God," if he had thus stated him to be one of the persons of the godhead, and "both God and man," thus "humbling him-"self to the death upon the cross for us, miserable sinners," &c. Had these expressions been brought forward as they ought, it would have been a task too hard even for the bishop's abilities to keep out of sight the doctrine of our church, as more distinctly expressed in her catechism, that this sacrament, as well as the other, is "a means whereby we re-"ceive inward and spiritual grace, and a pledge to assure us "thereof." If I shall be told that the bishop only professes to apply this office to what he had before laid down, and to adopt it for the use of such as joined in that rite, according to his notions, I must still protest against such application or adaptation, as being a process by which the Scriptures might be made to speak even the language of atheism; as in the well known case of a man's citing "there is no God," which is hardly a more gross mutilation and perversion of holy writ, than the present case is of our liturgy. I hope that I shall stand excused for having discussed this point so much at large. It was this instance of bad faith, as I conceive it to be, which first decided my opinion about bishop Hoadly. It must be recollected too that at this day, with many persons, the "Plain Account" passes for not only a harmless, but a useful and edifying book. Every thing indeed which contributes to set the character of bishop Hoadly in its proper light, is of great importance, as he is an authority mainly relied on by all who stand in opposition to the church. The Bangorian controversy forms an epoch in our ecclesiastical history. One great effect which it produced

has been the reducing our convocation to a mere cypher in practice. And of this we are reminded in newspapers and magazines, as often as the occasion recurs, always with a compliment to the memory of the enlightened prelate, who is held forth as the author of this blessing.

B.

(See p. 35.)

We are now told that the Essay on Spirit was not written by bishop Clayton, but "by a young clergyman in his "diocese, who shewed the manuscript to his Lordship, and "for reasons which may easily be conceived, expressed his "fear of venturing to print it in his own name. The "bishop, with that romantic generosity which marked his "character, took the matter upon himself," &c. Biogr. Brit. new ed. art. Clayton. This, it is evident, makes no difference as to the substance of the case. In note A. of that article, the reader will find an account of the controversy to which this pamphlet gave rise, with such an opinion upon, the result as might well be expected from the declared principles of the editor. Bigotry is of course imputed to all the opponents of the essay, with the single exception of Dr. Randolph. The conclusion is, however, not very different from what I have expressed elsewhere; and shews that the effects produced by this author were not in the end considerable. "Upon the whole," Dr. Kippis says, "the Essay "on Spirit, and the tracts on the same side of the question, "were the means of diffusing the Arian opinions, which "opinions, however, are now on the decline; many Unitarian "Christians tending fast to the opinions of Socinus." Upon this essay I cannot help mentioning one observation which struck me, before I knew that it had already been made by Mr.

Jones. The essayist takes the definition of spirit with which he opens his work, and on which he builds, from Spinosa, a professed Atheist. A hopeful authority it must be admitted for a Christian divine to rest upon: not as an *argumentum ad hominem*, in which case we may well turn the words of unbelievers upon them, but as the corner stone of his system.

But, whoever was the author of the essay on spirit, as bishop Clayton did not stop there, but proceeded to other publications in which he expressly contradicted the doctrines of our church, measures were taken towards a legal prosecution of his lordship, and a day actually fixed for a meeting of the Irish prelates at the house of the primate. "A censure," we are told, "was certain, and deprivation was apprehended." In the mean time the bishop died of a nervous fever. This intended proceeding is characterized by Dr. Kippis as a "persecution," and George the 2d is said to have disgraced himself by giving it his countenance. It is added as an aggravation that the bishop of Clogher was "distinguished above "several of his brethren both by his abilities and virtues," and in particular that he was superior to the primate (Stone) in those respects.

Upon this I must remark, first, that it is indeed no uncommon idea, but in my opinion a very pernicious one, that genius and talents carry with them their own excuse for whatever irregularities or offences a man may commit against religion or morality. Whereas I have always considered it to be the language of Scripture, as well as of common sense, that such persons are only the more guilty in proportion as they are more highly endowed. "To whom much is given, "of him much shall be required." If therefore it were allowed that bishop Clayton was that man of transcendant abilities and virtues, still it could form no reason why any deviations of his from the paths of duty should not be noticed or animadverted upon, as well as those of inferior men: nay, that this should be done by men inferior to him in many respects. Secondly, I must say that it is a perfect abuse of

terms to call this proceeding against the prelate in question by the name of "persecution." And it seems to me the more requisite to combat this position, because I find it elsewhere, in effect if not in terms, promulgated by this very Dr. Kippis under the authority of a learned prelate of our church, now living. In the Life of Dr. Lardner, the present bishop of Landaff is quoted as saying, "Newton and Locke were es-"teemed Socinians, Lardner was an avowed one: Clarke "and Whiston were declared Arians: Bull and Waterland "were professed Athanasians." (Surely a bishop of our church could not have written this: Bull's doctrine, I thought was professedly built, after the Scripture, upon the ante-nicene fathers. But to go on with the quotation.) "Who "will take upon him to say that these men were not equal "to each other in probity and scriptural knowledge? And "if that be admitted, surely we ought to learn no other "lesson from the diversity of their opinions, except that of "perfect moderation and goodwill towards all those who "happen to differ from ourselves. We ought to entertain "no other wish but that every man may be allowed without "loss of fame or of fortune, *et sentire quæ velit et quæ sen-*"*tiat dicere.*" Life of Lardner, prefixed to his Works, p. ci. Perfect moderation and goodwill towards all men is certainly what every Christian, and I trust churchmen as well as others, should and do practice. But what is insinuated goes much farther. It is evidently meant to condemn all such proceedings as were instituted against Clarke, Hoadly, and Clayton. Now, first, as to the loss of "fame." Every one knows that neither Dr. Clarke's, nor Hoadly's, nor Clayton's reputation was hurt by the proceedings which were had or prepared against them. Every man, and particularly every thinking man still has, as he would otherwise have had, his own opinion as to their doctrine and abilities. They were only brought more forward by the prosecution. Indeed we must be aware that vain men have often even courted persecution for the sake of the fame or notoriety with which it is

always attended. Secondly, as to "fortune," taking it as I must do, that here, as in the Biographia Britannica, the loss of preferment is meant, for it is clear that in no other way can a man's fortune be hurt in these days by his real or supposed heterodoxy; as to that point, I say, the proposition is still more unfounded. I deny that the suspending or depriving a man who publicly preaches or writes contrary to the doctrine of the church in which he is authorized to officiate, can be called "persecution," or even that the loss of stipend which may ensue can fairly be called a "loss of" the individual's "fortune." The proceeding is not meant, if rightly understood and instituted, for punishment; but in order that a trust, a sacred trust, may be taken from hands either incompetent or unwilling to discharge it, and transferred to such as are more competent or willing to execute that task. The doctrines of the trinity, and of the proper atonement of Christ are, as our church holds, the main and fundamental points of Christianity. Whoever takes preferment, takes it upon the solemn and special trust and confidence that he will maintain those doctrines. When a man finds himself unable from error, or from what he thinks a greater degree of light breaking in upon him, to discharge that trust; when he thus feels himself bound to act in opposition to engagements which he has so deliberately contracted, what should be his conduct? Should he not himself retire from the situation of which he can no longer fulfil the duties? And, if he will not of himself do that which is so obviously right and just, shall he not be compelled to the performance of this act of justice? Or shall the flock be left in prey to one who, if our belief be true, is, in respect of them, no better than a wolf? Surely, at least as long as a church is allowed to subsist, she should be allowed also to require from those whom she sends forth that they shall do her faithful service. As to the "loss of fortune" to the individual, it is no more than what happens to every man who has chosen for himself a line of life which by subsequent events, no matter whether of his own or of others producing,

he is rendered incapable of pursuing. And this, I trust, may serve also as an answer (in addition to those of Mr. Nares and others) to the most extraordinary pretensions of Mr. Stone, advanced in his late publications, as well as his very indecent attack upon his diocesan for only doing that which the bishop was most conscientiously bound to do.

C.

(See p. 40.)

THAT I am not calumniating, nor even mistaken in what I have here stated, I am enabled to produce a notable testimony from the pen of these gentlemen themselves, who are so well known under the title of evangelical preachers. In the Christian Observer for October last (1807) a publication which is understood to be conducted by the principal men of note in that party, at page 663, I have found the following description of themselves, which so much agrees with what I have said, that, had not my sermons been preached in the March preceding, I might have been suspected of having even borrowed my account from them. After giving what they call a summary of the state of the Christian church from the Reformation, to which I certainly should not implicitly subscribe, they come to the period in question, of which they thus speak: "In this state things remained till the appearance "of Wesley and Whitfield. When they arose, their superior "talents," (some of us might not admit this superiority without qualifying it in many important points; but let that pass) "zeal and incaution naturally still more alarmed the church. "The old cry of puritanism revived under another name; "and many excesses on the part of the new religionists seemed "to justify the hostility which was excited against them.

"Nor was this the only influence their movements had upon "the church. Their zeal, thank God, was contagious. It "communicated itself at first to some members of the estab- "lishment (whose number has since greatly increased) who, "without sanctioning the irregularities or the schism of these "two eminent characters, entered like them upon the apos- "tolic career," (which, it seems, they did not when they received ordination from the church) "of proclaiming loudly "the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, and pressing others "into the service of their crucified Redeemer." (They forget here to specify those peculiarities by which they have been really distinguished from their brethren, their attachment to the doctrines of Calvin.) These men have thus sprung up burning and shining lights in the "deadness and coldness "of the night of religion." (Which deadness and coldness we must of course impute to the great mass of their brethren, the more sober part of the established church.) "Forming "no sect," (Indeed! what then did Mr. Overton mean by his "true churchmen ascertained?" What do these gentlemen themselves mean by the denomination which they so often use of "evangelical clergy?") "betraying no self-interested "views, preserving in the heart of an old establishment the "vigour of youth; winning separatists to the church by "shewing them how pure she might be; giving to all who "love their Lord the right hand of charity," (that is, encouraging those sectaries, who as they state it elsewhere, (p. 676) "have no objection to give their attendance at church, when "a preacher who is true to the church principles, according "to their construction of them, is in the pulpit.") "drying "up the sources of schism; passing through good report, "and through evil report; they exhibit a beacon to warn "the unwary, to console the friends and alarm the enemies "of Christ. They go on conquering, and, we hope, to con- "quer, till all opposition to vital religion and sound morality "shall be subdued."

It is the opinion of some persons that in fifty, nay, in

twenty years, the Methodists will prescribe what sort of government there shall be in the church. I cannot but conceive that it is to some such conquest that the latter part of this paragraph alludes. These gentlemen will say indeed that they mean only a conquest over vice and irreligion: but this is the object of their calumniated brethren of the church as well as theirs. Besides there are cant words which are peculiarly useful in discovering men's intentions. Such in this case is the term "vital religion," which though it be a perfectly good expression in itself, and as originally applied, has been much more often used of late for the purpose of drawing invidious contrasts, than for real edification. What is said above of "drying up the sources of schism," may be better understood by adverting to what follows: and it will be seen that it is by joining with partial separatists, that is by giving up in some degree the establishment, that they expect (very foolishly indeed if they have really any such expectation) to "dry up "the sources of schism." "Strange as it may seem," they go on, "a large part of the establishment refuse to make any "distinction between this class of men and the separatists, "to whose increase in fact these persons alone oppose any "effectual barriers; and even the vagrant enthusiast (What will Messrs. the Wesleyan Methodists say to this sort of language?) "disowned alike by pious churchmen and sober dis- "sidents, who from a tub twangs his spiritual nonsense to a "company of deluded followers, is confounded by the blind- "ness of their prejudice with the person who has commanded "listening senates and emancipated a quarter of the globe." Saying nothing of the fulsomeness as well as falsehood of this panegyric on Mr. Wilberforce, observing only that these saints (as they give themselves out to be) can occasionally deal in flattery; leaving it with the very modest eulogium which they had before pronounced upon themselves; I shall only remark that Mr. Wilberforce is a partial separatist; I say, at least a partial separatist; for if he be not greatly belied, he is even more connected with dissenters than with churchmen:

I will add too with that class of dissenters who follow the tenets of Calvin, who tread in the steps of Whitfield rather than of Wesley. It is clear then that this man whom they bring forward as the leader of their host, as deserving of the highest praise, is a man whom all antiquity would have branded as a schismatic; one too of that description of men whom they themselves adduce (in effect, if not in terms,) as being most likely to bring about the destruction of the church. For thus in a subsequent article (p. 677.) they express themselves. After giving a hint about the negligence of the regular clergy, they say, "The subject however of the increase of dissenters, "or rather of Methodists, and of half-separatists from the "church (for the chief increase is of this kind) *of men whose* "*qualified secession undoubtedly may lead to very important* "*consequences to the establishment*, cannot be properly dis- "cussed unless it be viewed on every side. The diffusion of "knowledge of every kind, the more free exercise of private "judgment, the increased severity with which men are now "disposed to judge their superiors both ecclesiastical and "civil, the diminution of the general reverence for what is "ancient, conspire perhaps with other causes to set men free "from that strict allegiance which they formerly considered "to be due to the church." Such is the opinion which they have of partial separatists; such, also, as it appears further from this passage, is the mild and philosophical indifference with which the breach of church communion is by these evangelical gentlemen contemplated and disposed of! Let the reader now seriously consider these passages, in which, as it seems to me, the views of the sect have somewhat unguardedly been brought forward, and he will not think that I have gone too far when I have stated that the existence of such a body of men as those who style themselves the evangelical clergy has proved an encouragement to schism.

D.

(See p. 53.)

At the time when I preached this sermon I did not imagine that even before it could reach the press I should by anticipation actually receive this answer under the form of a sweeping condemnation of not me only but of all the sober members of the church of England. And it is made more pointed by the revival of an old and obsolete name in order to cast odium upon all those who are disposed with seriousness and with earnestness to maintain our present ecclesiastical establishment. We are therefore described as men attached to the "High "church school:" as if there were now such parties in the church as high church and low church. The latter, as every one knows, has for many years disappeared: it did not flourish greatly even in the days of Hoadly, and seems to have expired with archdeacon Blackburne. It could never in fact be in high repute; for it must always have borne the appearance of hollowness and treachery. What remained of it from the last-mentioned period with more consistency and manliness merged itself in the dissenting interest and professions. All who from that time are or have been of the church (with a very few exceptions, such as cannot constitute a party) are and have been content to be really and bonâ fide of the church, without disputing or undermining either her faith or discipline. If indeed the self-called evangelical clergy mean to take to themselves the denomination of low church (as from this article there is some appearance of such an intention) let them declare it; let the point be ascertained, and in that case there may be some reason for the distinction. But, I repeat, for several years past, we have been accustomed to hear of only churchmen and dissenters. Let those

who will, revive the amphibious brood, but let it be done openly. Under what class the writer of the article to which I allude means to range himself, may indeed admit of a doubt. From the bustle which he makes about philosophy, I should suspect him to be of the description mentioned by St. Paul, as walking "after the elements of the world, and not after "Christ." The passage of which I am speaking is found in the Christian Observer (the publication before mentioned as speaking authoritatively the language of the church Methodists) in the number for May last (1807) at page 318. The writer there, in accounting for the conduct of certain persons "attached to the high church school, who," as he pretends, "have shewn great apathy respecting the abolition of the "slave trade," (another evil report to which the poor church of England men are, it seems, to be exposed) thus gives his opinion; or rather that of *his fellows* as well as his own; for he is speaking in the character of a reviewer, and quite *ex cathedrâ*. "We," says he, "have always thought the whole "of the high church system to be rather defective than erro-"neous; and unless we mistake, most of its defects will be "found to grow, not unnaturally, out of certain prevailing "qualities in the moral and intellectual character of that "school. The principals among the class of religionists just "mentioned are in general men of vigorous understandings, "and not unfrequently well skilled in ancient learning; but "they rarely cultivate those habits of free and discursive "inquiry which we call philosophical, and are therefore ill "read in human nature, and ignorant of moral and political "science. In their tempers also, though not deficient in "many great and masculine qualities, they will often be "found rather harsh and arbitrary, not sufficiently diffident "of themselves, or compassionate towards their fellow crea-"tures." From this agreeable compound of personal character the writer deduces the peculiar creed which he ascribes to the persons in question. "They consider," he says, "God's government rather as regal than parental. The sys-

ment, and because thus only will be obviated the complaints made, whether justly or falsely, that unsound doctrines are instilled into the minds of the catechumens, and ideas of insubordination conveyed, together with the great truths of Christianity. This is what I am well aware will not be universally approved of. There are, I am afraid, persons who do not like even a good thing the better for being done regularly, and according to established order. They know, and we know, that when any object is left to be accomplished by irregular exertion, a much wider field is opened to the gratification of individual ambition and vanity. One measure only I will venture to point out, as being every way of importance. It should somehow or other be established as a law, that in all transfers of property the families of slaves should not be separated: that the parent should not be taken from the child, nor the husband from the wife. Without some such provision it is evident that (setting aside the misery which it produces), neither conjugal fidelity, nor the proper education of infants, can be looked for.

But, since it has been thus brought forward, let me be allowed to say a word or two more respecting this same "high church school:" the rather, as it may serve to ascertain the principles of these gentlemen who appear as its opponents, who would thus revive the party of Hoadly and of Blackburne. We deem then (it may be said) too highly of episcopacy; we consider it as of divine institution, and therefore not to be departed from. Certainly we do think that it is not to be departed from without such a necessity as does not exist in this kingdom; and we leave it to those churches abroad who have made the departure to justify themselves, as to them may seem best. But we deem also very highly of the priesthood. We do so; but we do it not on account of the priests themselves, but on account of the ministry which is entrusted to them, and to them only, and from which such advantages are derived to the people at

large. We look upon them, as the ambassadors of Christ duly commissioned, and we conceive that the benefits which are to be derived from a participation of the Sacraments will be more certainly, if not then only obtained, when administered by those who are thus duly commissioned. Now I am afraid that in both these points we shall not be supported by our (so called) evangelical brethren any more than by the dissenters. They are, as they tell us, indifferent about forms: they are for the substance; for vital religion, wherever they can find it. "Vital religion" is to them what "sincerity" was to Hoadly. It supplies all defects. The misfortune is, that both the one and the other are qualities of which God only can judge, and as to which a man may easily deceive himself. It is therefore as unwise as it is unwarrantable to sacrifice that which they choose to call forms, but which, if it be commanded, must be something essential, to the alleged greater facility of obtaining that which no man can ever be sure that he has found; which at least may as well be obtained (we say much better) in the regular way, as by irregular means; in the church as out of the church. As to the sacraments also, the evangelical clergy seem in their ideas to fall very short of the doctrine contained in our liturgy and articles. They will not allow that regeneration takes place in baptism; and consequently do not assent to the rubric, which declares that "children which are baptized, dying "before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." I suspect too that there is the same deficiency in respect of the other sacrament. I suspect it, as well from the general tenor of their language, as from observations of my own. But as one proof of this, I will venture to adduce what has lately happened in the East Indies, in the case of certain evangelical preachers, and under the auspices of certain evangelical rulers; for of this description, it is generally understood, are the present leading directors of the company. It will not be objected that this is a distant quarter of the globe, for at this moment the attention of the religious part

of the nation is particularly directed to that country. And it will be remembered that all which passes there is under the control of governors here at home. The facts which I allude to are these. One of the oldest chaplains at Calcutta is, and has been for several years past, in the habit of administering the communion, though confessedly only in deacon's orders: and I am told that it is even doubtful if he has any ordination at all. He justifies himself by saying that he has a call: and, as I am assured, holds all ecclesiastical authority and power to be useless. He is further stated to me as preaching antinomian, that is, high Calvinistic doctrines. In all this he is supported by several of his brethren, one of them a man of some note, and particularly by four of those who have been lately sent sent out. The same thing took place at Madras. Dr. Ker, the senior chaplain (the same gentleman who was formerly chaplain at St. Helena), did also, when only in deacon's orders, administer the sacrament. Representations on the subject have been transmitted from both presidencies, but, as far as appears, without effect. And one of the other chaplains having remonstrated against Dr. Ker's irregularities, has, on that account, suffered something very like persecution, and is now in England endeavouring to procure redress. Such is the state of the church in India, while men are disputing whether any or what sort of missionaries shall be sent thither. It should seem that while there is this total disregard of religious order and edification, while the sacraments of Christ are thus (speaking according to the sense of our church) profaned, missionaries may preach, but conversions will hardly follow. It is time indeed that government should seriously attend to the supplying of the religious wants both of Europeans, and of natives, in that country. I myself believe that the latter would gladly receive the truth, if it were properly proposed to them, and recommended by the example of those to whom they are in the habit of looking up as to their superiors. But whatever

may be the case with regard to them, surely, at least, our own worship ought to be pure and regular. Surely some check should be interposed to prevent a contempt of established order in those who appoint to such situations. If no care be taken to ascertain the qualifications of the chaplains sent out, the pulpits of Calcutta and of Fort St. George may as well be filled by professed sectaries, as by churchmen of this description.

Let it not be supposed that I have gone too far in the several discussions which I have here entered into. I have touched upon nothing but what materially concerns the credit of our national church. What I have said respecting the sacraments, both here, and in note A. is every way material to the subject of these Lectures. If the sacraments have been instituted by Christ himself, as special means or instruments of grace; and if further he have, as we contend, appointed a particular description of men to be "dispensers of those "mysteries," it must necessarily be a strong argument for abiding in communion with the established church, if in her most assuredly, perhaps, as we also contend, solely are found those ministers and dispensers, and, of course, those special means of grace.

The reader may observe farther the notable consistency of these editors of the Christian Observer; according to whom we are at one moment to be tied down to the strictest notions of justification by faith alone, and at another be invited to launch out into the wildest regions of discursive philosophy.

Nor let any man imagine that the publications which I have quoted, and upon which I have reasoned, are too insignificant to deserve so much notice. It was many years ago that somebody observed that "learning seemed to be retiring "to dictionary-makers, and compilers of magazines," and surely this is much more true of the present times. Every man must see how greatly the editors of magazines and reviews, nay, and of newspapers, contribute to form the pub-

"tem is made up altogether of submission and injunction. "The objects for effecting which certain regulations were "imposed, and the nature of the submission exacted are never "inquired into. The behests of the Almighty under the "law and the gospel, to the Jew and the Christian, are placed "on the same level;" (If they are, it is because the Scripture makes no distinction between them, and only so far as the former are not superseded; because also such is the doctrine of our church even as it is expressed in her seventh article) "and many among the high churchmen deem themselves "morally obliged to read with equal complacency the precept "delivered by Samuel to Saul, 'Go smite the Amalekites,' "and the legacy of peace which our blessed Master bequeath-"ed to his disciples." And lower down it is stated that as a consequence of these principles, the following effect is produced on the minds of those persons. "If slavery is men-"tioned in the Old Testament without being condemned, it "becomes almost an article of faith that it cannot deserve "condemnation. To be wiser than God is presumption; "and thus that blessed religion which offers to her sons "spiritual liberty as their richest inheritance, and which "by a silent influence has established social freedom, is "made auxiliary to the defence not only of slavery but of a "traffic in slaves infinitely more wicked and detestable than "the worst form of bondage which the world has yet wit-"nessed." Here first observing that, according to these men themselves, it is spiritual wisdom only that is promised in scripture, I may be allowed to pause; I may be permitted to ask who these men are that charge the "high church school" with this want of common feeling? Why, forsooth, men who have over and over again intimated their opinion that the doctrine of our articles is Calvinistic: who have told us that Mr. Overton, when vindicating Mr. Romaine and Dr. Hawker, and persons thinking like Mr. Romaine and Dr. Hawker, has fully established this point; who themselves profess to be Calvinistic; who therefore if they be consistent,

can, with perfect complacency, contemplate the "*horribile* "*decretum*," which has, according to them, from the beginning, without any consideration of what might be their efforts to serve God, doomed the far greater part of mankind to inevitable perdition! Who as to themselves, with a reasonable share of that confidence which they impute to us, have decided that they are of the number of the elect. These are the men who are to teach us humanity, meekness, and liberality; who are to complain of the harshness and arrogance of their more regular brethren. What have we not heard, and what may we not believe of the unfeelingness and obduracy with which these men, or at least the more ignorant members of their sect, are wont to look down upon and arraign those whom they consider as the "*perdita massa*?" On the other hand the high church men (if the word must be used) have been always considered as leaning to Arminianism. Charity, therefore, whether in thought or deed, occupies a much more prominent part in their creed than in that of their detractors. All their habits in fact give the lie to the imputation here cast upon them. Where indeed did this critic discover among them that ignorance of mankind, and that want of philosophy; if by philosophy be meant only that proper and fair use of reason which Christianity both warrants and requires? Did he find it in the chief opponents of Hoadly? In either of the two Sherlocks, father or son? Did he find it in Secker, who was particularly an object of attack to Blackburne, on account of his supposed high church principles? Where are the considerable characters, living or dead, upon whom he can fix this notable charge of ignorance and bigotry? Indeed, I thought that the appearance of those great apostles Messrs. Wesley and Whitfield, had only been called for, and was become salutary and edifying, most pointedly because of the too great predominance of this philosophizing spirit among the divines of our church; from the excess of liberality which before these times prevailed; nay, I think the reader will see this plainly enough declared in this very publication, at the pages referred to in the preceding note.

We might indeed wonder not only upon what the accusation is founded, but why it is brought forward, if the purpose were not so expressly disclosed. It seems then that upon this same high church, that is, upon the real church of England, is to be cast the odium of being an enemy to liberty: and this from not having taken a part in the opinion of these gentlemen sufficiently active in the abolition of the slave trade. This too, I suppose, will form a principal feature in her condemnation, when the time shall come for her overthrow to be completed. This is a charge however, to which she will not plead guilty; nay, which she will repel with indignation. Her true sons are as averse to every sort of slavery; are as little arbitrary in their principles as any men alive: I might add (according to the well known saying of a Frenchman, *Qui dit Democrate, dit tiran*) more than the sectaries who defame them. But the fact is simply this: the dissenters, including the church Methodists, treated the abolition of the slave trade as a party question; they made a point of supporting it in a body, and therefore were or appeared to be unanimous upon the subject. The real churchmen, besides that, as being the more numerous body, they were not so likely to unite in any case, did not so treat it, nor made any such point. Every man therefore acting and thinking according to the particular bent of his mind, or as circumstances might influence his judgment, the consequence was that not only they were divided in opinion, but held different shades of opinion. Many were most decided abolitionists, while others hesitated. This is what would have happened among the dissenters also, if the free range which they are wont to give to their ideas had not been repressed by the consideration above stated. What indeed might be the differences of opinion thus entertained by those who were content to think for themselves it is needless now to inquire: only I will mention that some might and did think that it might be as well if the slave trade were only regulated; and the abolition of it should not precede but follow the abolition of slavery. Why such an

idea was not more generally entertained may be easily enough accounted for. Of slavery it is universally, or almost universally agreed, that the abolition must be gradual. "Every well "informed abolitionist," says this same critic (Christ. Observ. ub. supr. p. 327) "deprecates an immediate emancipation as "sincerely as the most prejudiced colonist." How indeed was slavery abolished among the primitive Christians? How was villeinage made to disappear in this country? But measures which are only to operate gradually could, as it is evident, leave no present harvest of popularity, of fame, or of influence to be reaped by the authors of them. Their wisdom could only be proved, and their merit ascertained by time: that too, at a period when they would have ceased to be in the contemplation of any but the sober and reflecting part of mankind. They could not therefore have given currency to any such flights as those which I have mentioned in the preceding note respecting Mr. Wilberforce. Why I said that the compliment there paid to that gentleman was both false and fulsome, the reader may now see; for, first, it was not Mr. Wilberforce that "drew listening senates," but Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt. And, secondly, neither Mr. Pitt nor Mr. Fox, nor Mr. Wilberforce, nor, I will add, Mr. Clarkson, have "emancipated" any "quarter of the globe." What measures will now be taken for the abolition of slavery itself remains a question. It may be a question also whether the abolition of the slave trade will or will not contribute to the furthering of this more important abolition. That both questions may be resolved in the way most favourable to liberty, and most conducive to the eternal as well as temporal welfare of the negroes, is, I am sure, the sincere wish of every true member of the church of England. We wish too that whatever may be attempted may be carried on under the auspices of government itself; more especially the providing for the religious instruction of the slaves and their admission to all the benefits of the Christian covenant. We wish it, because these are duties undoubtedly incumbent upon every govern-

lic opinion: and what numbers there are who hardly read any thing else, and who trust to no other guides. But, further, the magazines which I have quoted are the declared oracles of their respective sects, and actually dispense among the members at large those flowers of learning, as well as of piety, which it is the appointed task of their most able and approved teachers to collect. We have indeed no other equally authorised and authentic repository of their tenets, whether religious or political.

E.

(See p. 178, n. 24.)

Extract from the 13th chapter of the 2d book of Cardinal de Cusa de Concordantiâ Catholicâ. (See his works, printed at Basil, 1565, p. 726; or Schardius's Collection de Jurisdictione, &c. Basil, 1566, p. 528.) "Sed pro investigando "veritatem illius, an scilicet de jure positivo omnes prelati "inferiores papa, derivative scilicet ab ipso papa jurisdic- "tionem habeant, ut notent doct. in c. quæ ab ecclesiarum, "præsertim dominus fr. 3. Oportet primo, si hoc verum "foret, Petrum aliquod a Christo singularitatis recepisse, et "papam in hoc successorem esse. Sed scimus, quod Petrus "nihil plus potestatis a Christo recepit aliis apostolis. 21 "distinct. in novo. 24. q. 1. loquitur. Nihil enim dictum "est ad Petrum quod aliis dictum non sit. Nonne sicut "Petro dictum sit quodcunque ligaveris supra terram: ita "aliis, quodcunque ligaveritis? et quanquam Petro dictum "est Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram: tamen per petram "Christum, quem confessus est, intelligimus. Et si Petrus "per petram tanquam lapis fundamenti ecclesiæ intelligi de- "beret: tunc secundum sanctum Hieronymum ita similiter "alii apostoli fuerunt lapides fundamenti ecclesiæ. De quibus

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